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OXFORD POLITICS
By President of the Union

THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION

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THE House of Commons has been wrangling again over unemployment, and the debates have centred round the old problem of public works. The Government's policy, as we learned the other day from Mr. MacDonald's letter to the Bethnal Green Borough Council, is to discontinue the system of "State-assisted relief works." With this policy little fault could be found if all that was in question was digging holes and filling them up again. But that, as the Government knows very well, is not what is demanded. The development of public works—of things and services which are needed and whose provision will employ a host of men who are now rotting on the dole—does not mean waste, but true economy. Every proposal for such works, from house building to land drainage, is picked to pieces by the "experts" in Whitehall and the cheese-parers in the Cabinet. Think of the administrative difficulties! we are told. Think of the cost! We do; but we also think of the needs of the nation, of the value of the works in question, and of the state of the unemployed. And does Sir Hilton Young expect anyone to believe him when he says that there is not and never has been any opposition on the part of the Government to remunerative works?

Liberals on the Brink

When *will* the Samuelites do it? Sir Herbert still shivers on the brink of that perpetually receding Rubicon which only Major Nathan has yet had the courage to cross. The Welsh Liberals (always excluding the Simonites, who had better honestly label themselves Conservatives and be done with it) have advanced a further step; having voted with a Labour motion of censure they can scarcely retreat dry-shod. There is nothing in this Labour motion to scare the mildest Liberal, and Sir Herbert's way of avoiding decision on this occasion is to propose another motion also condemning the Government on the score of unemployment. The two motions are in substance almost identical. Thus by abstaining on the Labour motion and voting for its substance on their own, the Samuelites hope to gain the kudos of opposing the Government while avoiding the obloquy of supporting the Labour Party. We doubt if these niceties of political behaviour will impress the House or the public; and we should not be surprised soon to see a protest from Liberal voters in the constituencies which will force their hesistant leaders to say on which side of the House they really stand.

Ultimatums in the Far East

Japan's last efforts to persuade the world that she is an injured innocent have failed, as they were bound to do, and the Committee of Nineteen has passed its draft report. The report, which is an unequivocal censure of Japanese aggression, will go before the Assembly next week, and no one doubts it will be adopted. Whether Japan will then leave the League is not certain. Theoretically she might remain in it though not of it—provided the whole dispute stood still. But it is not going to stand still. The

Japanese are maturing their plans for a big drive in Jehol at the end of this month. Ultimatums, it is reported, are on the point of being issued to the Chinese commanders and the Nanking Government, and the Chinese are preparing for a desperate resistance. There is, in short, to be war on the grand scale, though in the absence of a formal declaration it may be pretended that technically it is not war. But the Chinese will probably insist that the advance of the Japanese armies does constitute an act of war, and it will be impossible for the League, without utterly stultifying itself, to deny it. In that event, Article XVI and sanctions will be on the *tapis*. This lamentable situation is the result of the timidity and short-sightedness shown by the Powers in the past. It is still possible, we believe, to stop the Japanese career of conquest by diplomatic and economic pressure. But if the League Powers and America have not the stomach for that, we must look forward to an era of disaster in Asia.

Peace or War in Europe

Impatience is growing inside as well as outside the Disarmament Conference, and Mr. Eden and the British Government are not alone in their eagerness for definite agreements with the least possible delay. It is beginning to be realised, too, that any agreements that are made must comprise large reductions; a "modest advance" will not satisfy Germany's demand for equality. But it is difficult to see how anything substantial can be achieved without a restoration of confidence. Belief in peace, in the machinery of the League, in the value of covenants and treaties, has received a heavy blow in the Far East, and it is being attacked and undermined day by day in the heart of Europe. Herr Hitler has opened his mouth about the Danzig corridor, and the Poles are in a state of alarm. Arms have been smuggled through Austria and aeroplanes have been sent direct from Italy into Hungary. And now France is buzzing with talk of a secret agreement between Italy, Germany and Hungary. That rumour may be baseless, but it finds credence with many, and the resulting fears and suspicions hardly strengthen the will to disarm. It is significant that French newspapers are talking about the isolation of France, looking doubtfully at their pillars of support in Jugoslavia and Poland and Rumania, and canvassing the chances of a better understanding with Soviet Russia.

The Chances of Disarmament

In all these circumstances the pessimists are predicting another fiasco at Geneva; and we are even assured by an authority in one of our respectable daily papers that "it is safe to assume that plans for the rehabilitation of British sea-power are already being prepared." For our own part, we are not quite so hopeless. Provided that the French do not go back on their recognition of the German claim to equality (as it is possible they may do, if their own demand for security is not satisfied), there is yet a chance of agreement on certain big things. At the moment the main points under discussion are Mr. Hoover's proposal for naval reductions, the British proposal for the abolition of military and naval air forces, the French proposal for the reduction of land effectives, and the Italian proposal for the abolition of heavy guns and tanks. Only a miracle—or another world war—would give us all those things at once. But common sense may give us a sufficient measure of each of them to prevent the re-armament of Germany. And the fear, which is now a very real one, of Germany re-arming herself should be an important factor in the strengthening of common sense.

Fascism in Germany

Herr Hitler and his friends lose no time in justifying the prophets of woe in Germany. They have disclosed no really constructive policy; but they are prolific in plans of destruction and repression. The persecution of the Communists—and, to a lesser extent, of the Social Democrats—has begun in earnest, and this will culminate, it is expected, in the proscription of the Party before long. The gagging of the press and of free speech is widespread, and is affecting not only the Left but the Centre. The Prussian Government has been deposed by presidential decree and put under a Commission of the Reich, and both in Prussia and elsewhere important officials who are guilty of the crime of Republicanism are being dismissed. The other German States, who live in fear for their own liberties, are conferring, as we write, on the methods of defence to be adopted. And a day or two ago the first step was taken towards the establishment, as the *Times* Berlin correspondent puts it, of a Fascist regime in Germany. The Brown Army and the Stahlhelm—that is to say, the private forces of the Nazis and the Nationalists—are in effect to be "nationalised"; they will be issued with arms and used as auxiliary police in Prussia, one of their chief duties being the policing of election meetings in the country districts. What with this and other sinister arrangements which are being made, the general elections on March 5th will be anything but free. And should the polls even so be adverse to the Government, constitutionalism will still be doomed, either by the proscription of the Communist Party or by the proclamation of a state of "emergency," which will give dictatorship to the Hitler-Papen-Hugenberg combination.

The Ford Bank Crisis

The declaration of a banking moratorium in the State of Michigan bears witness to the continued precariousness of the financial situation in America. In consequence of the operations of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, which has come to the rescue of a great number of tottering banks, there has recently been a diminution in the number of bank failures in the U.S.A. Yet it is common knowledge that beneath the surface things are far from well with the banks, and that a great mass of depreciated securities is still being carried by them with the Corporation's aid. In the present case, the financial interests blame Mr. Ford for the crisis, because he refused to accept a plan put forward by the Corporation under which his large deposits in common with those of other big business firms would have become frozen. On his refusal, the State Governor declared a moratorium, in order to prevent the big depositors from rushing to withdraw their money, and so leaving the smaller depositors to bear the loss. Probably some arrangement to deal with the problem will be made before the moratorium expires; but obviously a crisis of this sort is calculated to start a fresh epidemic of currency hoarding in the United States, and therefore to exert a fresh deflationary influence on prices. It may be thought that this precarious condition of their internal finances ought to make the Americans more ready to

co-operate with other countries in reflationary measures; actually it seems to work the other way, by making them feel so poor themselves as to be quite indisposed to let their debtors off payment.

Mr. MacDonald and the U.S.A.

Indeed, it is now being realised that the difficulties in the way of a satisfactory working agreement between ourselves and the Americans are extremely formidable. It is therefore being suggested that, instead of entering at once into formal negotiations about war debts or anything else, we should send Mr. Ramsay MacDonald on a purely informal mission to talk things over with Mr. Roosevelt as soon as he becomes President, and let formal discussions wait on the creation of a more favourable atmosphere. Undoubtedly Mr. MacDonald enjoys a very wide popularity in the United States, and would be *persona gratissima* for presenting the British point of view; and, no less certainly, there is real danger of a complete deadlock if formal negotiations are opened at once. A visit from Mr. MacDonald might induce the Americans to approach more nearly to our point of view. But there is also a danger that Mr. MacDonald, who has by no means a strong hand in financial matters, might come back bearing Greek gifts like those which Mr. Baldwin brought home ten years ago. We might find ourselves committed, for example, to a return to the gold standard without the conditions already laid down being fulfilled. We might give away too much, on the strength of more hopes, and get too little from the Americans in return. If Mr. MacDonald does so it is to be hoped he will be fortified with strong-minded advisers well aware of the dangers of an unconditional return to gold.

Road and Rail

The battle over the Salter Report has been fairly joined this week. On the one hand, Sir Arthur Salter has addressed a gathering of M.P.s in its support, and on the other the road transport interests have held a formidable protest meeting, supported for this occasion by two ex-Ministers of Transport, Lord Mount Temple (formerly Col. Ashley) and Mr. Herbert Morrison, and also by Sir A. Griffith-Boscawen, who was Chairman of the Royal Commission on Transport. The chief question at issue is whether the road transport industry, as far as it is concerned with goods, ought to bear a larger share than at present of the costs of road maintenance and construction. The Salter Committee and the railway companies say "Yes"; the road transport interests, or most of them, answer that the basis proposed by the Committee is unfair, and that it is a reactionary policy to slow down road development in the interests of railway stockholders. Sir Arthur is in some difficulty in defending his Report. He sees the need for co-ordination between road and rail, but to propose this was not within his Committee's terms of reference, so that it could only make recommendations for a readjustment of burdens on a basis on which co-ordination schemes could subsequently be based. It has, however, become plain that the attempt to deal with the problem in this piecemeal fashion is likely to provoke the maximum of opposition, and the Government may find itself speedily driven on towards some more ambitious scheme for reconciling the divergent interests of the two branches of inland transport.

Wild Birds

Lord Buckmaster's speech in introducing a new Bill for the protection of wild birds was not only sincere and eloquent, it was also an unanswerable statement of the revolting facts. The Government spokesman, the Earl of Lucan, replied with the typical speech of a Minister who is looking for reasons for doing nothing. To prevent the packing of living wild birds in paper bags, the killing of hundreds of thrushes, larks, wrens, linnets and even kingfishers and dippers in order that 10 per cent. may survive in cages; the blinding of song birds with red hot needles so that they may sing more sweetly—to pass an Act drastic enough to stop these things would, the Earl of Lucan explained, cause "considerable opposition" from persons "interested or those who would be adversely affected." "The selling or keeping of any scheduled bird as a pet or for exhibition would be illegal, the trade of bird shops which cater for keepers or exhibitors would be taken away, and the very considerable trade in bird seed and other food would be seriously affected." It is difficult to have patience with such stuff. Of course there are "administrative difficulties," and Lord Buckmaster's may not be the best possible form of words. But does anyone think if the Government wanted to act that it would need a Select Committee to make a further inquiry?

Pacifism at Oxford

Seldom have we seen anything more diverting than the rage and astonishment caused by the Oxford Union resolution. The pages of the *Telegraph* and *Morning Post* are wet with the tears of sexagenarian Oxonians lamenting over the decadence of their Alma Mater. A. A. B., whose articles in the *Evening Standard* are not less funny in their way than Low's caricatures, tells us that the war broke the mould of generous youth and that we are undermined by "a confederacy of internationalists" under the "patronage of the polyglot League of Nations." The Mayor of Oxford, found by a *Daily Express* representative, Bible in hand, weeps over the growth of Communism in Oxford; a parcel of white feathers descends upon the Union, to be eagerly snatched and worn by the offending pacifists: it is even suggested that Cambridge should show its displeasure by refusing to row the boat-race. Mr. Randolph Churchill and others (including Mr. Quintin Hogg who led the opposition to the motion) actually propose to whip up patriotic old life members of the Union to make a pilgrimage to Oxford to expunge the offending resolution from its records—a procedure which is not only laughable in its futility, but surely also outrages the tradition that non-resident life-members do not interfere with the undergraduate conduct of debates. The *Times* takes a more intelligently conservative line, dismissing the vote as the "Children's Hour." What is the truth? First, that Union debates must not be taken too seriously and that no doubt some undergraduates who would fight in some circumstances were swept away by the eloquence of Mr. Joad—or put off by the patriotism of Mr. Hogg. Secondly, that the vote was a pacifist and not a Communist vote—the Communists, we understand, were mainly engaged elsewhere. Thirdly, that the vote is genuinely symptomatic of a remarkable movement of the Left now going on in Oxford. What these elderly Oxonians will not even begin to understand is that the younger generation really has pacifist and internationalist convictions.

DRAGGING ALONG THE BOTTOM

WHAT justification has the Prime Minister for speaking, in his letter to the Bethnal Green Borough Council, of "signs of national recovery"? The justification is this. The panic measures taken by one country after another to restrict imports and regulate overseas trade, while they have reacted disastrously on world prosperity and on the world's standard of living, have undoubtedly been effective to some extent in establishing a sort of equilibrium, and have thus reduced the influence of unreasoning panic on the world's affairs. The scope for speculators and panic-mongers to play on people's fears has been restricted, and something has been done to restore an artificial stability at an exceedingly low level of trade, income, production and employment. Capitalism has calmed its nerves by means of a lowering diet of commercial restrictions, moratoria, agreed defaults, and simple refusals to pay; and at length most of the patients are tucked up in bed in an exceedingly weakened condition instead of roaming feverishly about the draughty passages of the house of commerce.

So far, things look a little better than they did, and we in Great Britain, though we have less trade and employment than a year ago, have fared less disastrously since 1931 than other nations. We have greatly reduced our adverse balance of trade; and, despite the hardships of the unemployed, we have done this at less cost to our standard of life than most of our competitors. Protectionists, of course, claim that this purely relative success is due to the adoption of their favoured remedy; but we think nearly all economists will agree that it is due far more to our abandonment of the attempt to maintain the pound sterling at an absurdly high international value. Our going off gold has done far more to reduce the balance than all our new protective arrangements; and we have been for the moment aided in readjusting ourselves to the changed international value of sterling by the continued fall in gold prices, which has prevented our cost of living from going up in spite of the depreciation of the pound.

To say this is not to suggest that tariffs have been without influence. Indeed, a glance at last year's figures of imports and exports shows that they have materially altered the course of trade. Our retained imports of food, drink, and tobacco were in 1932 about four and a half per cent. less in volume than in 1930, and our imports of raw materials about four per cent. less, whereas our imports of manufactured goods fell off by more than a third. In terms of values the decline was, of course, far greater; but the figures of volume give a better indication of what has really been happening. We have dispensed, to an astonishing extent, with almost all types of manufactured imports that can possibly be made at home. We have thus been able to keep up our purchases of indispensable foodstuffs and materials almost to what we were buying from abroad in 1930.

In this we have been greatly helped by the fact that our exports have not declined in proportion to the fall in total imports. In comparison with 1930 British exports have fallen in volume by about 23 per cent., whereas retained imports of all classes are down by less than 10 per cent. for 1932. But in terms of values the corresponding figures are under 17 per cent. for exports, and nearly 25 per cent. for imports. In other words, we have been buying our imports of foodstuffs and materials at quite abnormally cheap rates, even in depreciated pounds, whereas we have been selling our exports at relatively satisfactory prices to ourselves, in pounds, and yet cheaply to foreigners whose currencies are still upon a gold basis. The fall in our manufactured imports is due partly to tariffs and partly to the increased sterling cost of purchases in gold standard countries, whereas the maintenance of exports is due almost solely to our departure from gold.

Our national economic situation has thus been eased for the time being, mainly at other countries' expense, despite the falling off in our invisible exports—which, of course, our policy has tended to make fall off still farther. But we cannot afford to congratulate ourselves too warmly on our immunity. For one thing, the device of currency depreciation is becoming unduly contagious, as the recent history of Denmark, New Zealand, South Africa, Canada, and other countries serves to show. And, for another, our temporary ease is largely due to the very fall in the prices of foodstuffs and materials which is admitted to be one of the most formidable obstacles to world recovery. If these prices had not fallen to an abnormal extent, we should have found it far harder to establish a new equilibrium of international payments; and to the extent to which we are successful, in conjunction with other countries, in raising world prices, a new problem of readjustment will present itself in this country. If tariffs and currency depreciation do once begin to lower the British standard of life, will the British public continue to acquiesce in the protectionist policy which helps to bring this about?

Still, whatever difficulties may lie ahead, we have for the moment our respite, which is also our opportunity, if we will but have the sense to take advantage of it. For, thanks to the improved balance of trade and to the settling down of world conditions on a basis of accepted adversity, we are at the present time not at all worried lest the pound may depreciate farther, but rather lest an appreciation may create new problems for British exporters and for the countries which have put their currencies on a sterling basis. It follows that there is just now a considerable margin of elasticity within which we are free to act. Money, in the sense of credit awaiting eligible borrowers, is available in plenty, and is lying idle only because the borrowers are scarce. Our policy of national "economy" makes them scarce, by exerting a continued deflationary influence even in face of a plentiful supply of banking resources. Yet we could, if the Government would but give a lead in the stimulation of more liberal spending for productive uses, expand our industrial activity under present conditions without any fear at all of provoking either a run on the pound or an unmanageable increase in the cost of imports. That we are not doing this, but are still in fact doing the direct opposite, is the result of prolonging into a period of monetary plenty conditions appropriate only to a time of acute financial crisis.

It may, of course, be said that, even if this view is warranted on purely economic grounds, the present political outlook in Europe is so menacing as to invalidate purely economic considerations. But in what respect can it be even alleged that the maintenance of a policy of public parsimony is strengthening Great Britain to meet a political crisis? Politically as well as economically wide

spread unemployment is a source of weakness; and, as the dangers of European politics are largely the outcome of economic distress, whatever serves to exaggerate this distress is calculated to make the political outlook still more menacing. If we could, by a policy of internal industrial revival, give a stimulus to similar movements in other countries, the effort would be both to bring nearer international action in the economic field and greatly to diminish the political dangers in Europe.

In short, the best help towards the success of our negotiations with the Americans and towards concerted action for economic recovery in Europe would be to take ourselves the first steps towards the stimulation of industry and employment within our own borders—not by further protective measures designed to transfer distress from ourselves to others, but by public measures calculated to increase the demand for labour and the incomes at the disposal of the consuming public. For the danger is that the world, having by national measures done something to achieve stability at a very low level, may now fail to take the necessary steps to turn stagnation into a steady, if slow, upward movement towards economic recovery. The things done during the past two years by individual countries to achieve some degree of internal stability amid world chaos have meaning only if, at the first opportunity, they are made the basis of constructive efforts to increase economic activity. In proportion to our relative success in stabilising our own conditions, it is now our responsibility to give a lead to the world in this constructive policy. If we fail, such stability as now exists will probably be wrecked in a general political collapse. That is the case for acting now, while the tendencies are neatly balanced. We cannot afford to wait for world agreement, or even for agreement with America; for the chances of getting world agreement may easily depend on our taking, here and now, courageous action by ourselves.

POLITICAL TENDENCIES AT OXFORD

[*In view of the resolution carried by 275 votes to 153 in the Oxford Union Society that "this House will in no circumstances fight for its King and Country," we have asked Mr. Hardie, the present President of the Union, to discuss current political tendencies in Oxford. Mr. Hardie is, of course, speaking only for himself in this article.*—ED., N. S. & N.]

IN the last year or two the swing to the Left among students of politics at Oxford has been very striking. My sources of information about Conservatism and Liberalism are few, but at the moment it seems roughly true to say that the Conservatives are almost to a man Liberals but for the name; that the Liberals are all followers of Sir Herbert Samuel and Mr. Lloyd George; that more of them follow the latter than the former; that Sir John Simon has no following at all, and that the Socialists are extreme Socialists, prepared to go even farther than the resolutions of the Leicester Conference would have them go, and increasingly interested in the gospel according to Marx. Finally there are the Communists, whose mere existence in an organised form at Oxford is a sign of the times which should not be ignored.

In October, 1931, the Oxford University Labour Club did not hesitate to ask Mr. MacDonald to resign his position as President of the Club, and appointed Mr. G. D. H. Cole in his place. There was some opposition to this step in the Club at the time, and the foundation of a rival body to represent a National Labour point of view was confidently expected. No such club has been founded, and while Mr. Lloyd George seems to have a great hold on the minds of many undergraduates Mr. MacDonald appears to be without any influence at all. The Labour Club now has a membership of nearly five hundred, and that it holds a well-attended meeting every week is, in view of the innumerable calls on the time of an Oxford undergraduate, a very creditable achievement. The Club sent a delegation to the demonstration in Hyde Park last Sunday, a delegation whose appearance was greeted with great enthusiasm by other demonstrators.

The Thursday Club, a discussion club for Labour dons, has a membership of between thirty and forty, mostly men under the age of thirty, most of them definite Socialists; it is said (though here I am open to correction) that no Oxford economist can be found to support the National Government. The project of the foundation in emulation of Cambridge of a University Labour Party is at the moment being actively canvassed.

The October Club, a definitely Communist organisation, held its first meeting in January, 1932. When it was founded it was in most Oxford circles regarded as a joke and not a particularly good joke, and it was confidently prophesied that when its founder went down the Club would collapse. Actually it now has a membership of between two and three hundred, though, of course, it is true that many of these members (it is impossible to say what exact proportion) have joined because they are interested in Soviet Russia and in Communism rather than because they are themselves uncompromising Marxists. The October Club, contrary to expectation, has come to stay; and most of the Octobrists are very far from being neurotic cranks, but are perfectly serious and intelligent students of political questions.

There are signs of a growth of a "united front" between the Labour Club and the October Club, and both clubs co-operated to give very practical help to the hunger marchers when they passed through Oxford last October.

This swing to the Left has recently been seen in operation at the Union. Young men are not normally Die-hards, and the Union is not normally Conservative. Nor is it normally Socialist. At an average debate the majority of members present could best be described as "radicals"; the backwoodsmen who only come when some distinguished visitor has been billed tend to swell the Tory ranks. Much depends on the accidents of personality. If, for example, a particularly brilliant Tory speaker is in residence, he will build up a considerable body of support for his point of view. Further, it is worth noticing that since the financial crisis of 1931 brought home to us the realisation of a more permanent and deep-rooted crisis in the whole social and economic order, the tradition of the Oxford Union epigram, of which Mr. Philip Guedalla, President in 1911, was the greatest and most brilliant exponent, has been rapidly on the wane. Speakers are now more serious, witticisms few and far between, and political feeling very strong.

In October, 1931, in common with the rest of the country, the Union gave its support to the National Government. Disillusionment was very rapid. For a time there was much talk of the possibility of the formation of a new progressive party of the Left Centre, but last term, after a debate in which Mr. Duff Cooper was followed by Mr. George Lansbury, the House voted by a majority of sixty-seven that: "In Socialism lies the only solution to the problems facing this country." No such motion had ever before been carried.

The process of the swing to the Left has been continued this term. The British Empire was not held to be a menace to international goodwill, but any hope of a future for British Liberalism was denied; and at the third debate, when the Society for the second time in its history was visited by a team of two speakers from Ruskin College, a motion was carried demanding the abolition of the Means Test and an immediate restoration of the cuts in the rates of unemployment benefit. Finally, on Thursday, February 9th, after a debate of exceptionally high standard before an exceptionally large House,

the motion: "That this House will in no circumstance fight for its King and Country," was carried by 275 votes to 153.

This decision has produced a great deal of comment, mainly misinformed, in the London press. The question debated was in no way the question of the relative advantages of monarchy and republicanism, though that is a fit and proper subject for public discussion. Nor in the debate itself was any slur cast on the memory of those who were killed fighting for their King and Country between 1914 and 1918. The question for the Union was that of how, since a solemn pledge had been given to those men that they were fighting in a war to end war, that pledge could best be carried into effect. The Union, having been provided with the opportunity, decided quite sincerely and quite seriously that the best method of ending war was that of individual resistance to any future war; and many intelligent people who disagree with that argument would be bound on reflection to admit that it is an argument for which a great deal can be said. Apart from the party clubs the most flourishing political organisation at Oxford is the League of Nations Society. But the feeling that the League bluff has been successfully called by the Japanese is naturally very general.

The present generation of Oxford undergraduates as a whole probably does more hard work and more hard thinking than any previous generation as a whole, and certainly has more access to sources of political information. Is this swing to the Left at Oxford to be met with the serious consideration with which it deserves to be met, or is it to be met only with vulgar abuse?

F. M. HARDIE

A LONDON DIARY

A YEAR ago it was as much as one's reputation was worth to advocate spending and to point out that indiscriminate economy was a policy for a famine, not for a glut. Indignant patriots put on their hair-shirts, dismissed their under-gardeners, and denounced me and other people who were willing to embarrass the National Government in its great task of increasing unemployment. To-day I am bombarded with invitations to "spend for employment." The new cry suits industry better than economy, now that economy no longer seems to mean a reduction of rates and taxes. One man I know of was persuaded by the new call upon his patriotism to ask for an estimate for refencing his land. When he rejected the estimate as exorbitant, the firm quoted a slightly lower figure and reinforced its plea for spending by explaining that, if he did not have the work done, it would be obliged to dismiss an old employee of excellent character and long service. I do not know how prevalent such methods of coercion may be. I suppose advertising is usually considered sufficient. My eye was attracted the other day by a really immense streamer on a shop in the West End bidding me to "*spend and spend courageously*." I looked at the shop more closely. It was an undertaker's. "Courageously" was certainly the right word.

* * *

I see that Lord Kylsant, who has recently completed his prison sentence for a misdemeanour under the Larceny Act of 1861, has taken his seat with all formality in the Upper House. This seems logically consistent in view of the fact that his resignation from his clubs is said not to have been accepted, and I do not pretend surprise that the social ostracism which is the severest part of a prison sentence for the comparatively poor should not be applied in the case of the titled and the great. I only wish that the end of the sentence was the end of the punishment for the poor as well for the rich. But the event prompted me to ask a legal friend just what degree of human perfection is legally demanded in our legislators. The position is this. No one, be he Lord Spiritual, Lord Temporal or ordinary human being, is entitled to sit or vote as a member of either House or retain any office under the Crown or public employment if he has been convicted of treason or felony or been sentenced to death, penal servitude or ordinary imprisonment for a term exceeding twelve months, until he has either suffered the punishment or received a free pardon. But conviction for a misdemeanour is not even a temporary disqualification. Now the removal of the disqualification after sentence, which is reasonable enough in the case of a member of the House of Commons whose record will certainly be known by the electors who may be asked to return him, seems in the case of the Upper House to put a somewhat severe strain on the doctrine of *noblesse oblige*. As the law stands a peer can commit the most aggravated felony, serve his sentence and continue to do his bit in the good work in the Legislature or, in the case of a misdemeanour, his fellow peers could raise no objection if he got his taxi to stop at Westminster on the way from the Old Bailey or the Court of Criminal Appeal while he sat and voted before continuing his journey to Brixton or Wormwood Scrubbs. On the other hand, a bankrupt peer is disqualified from voting or sitting until he obtains from the Court not merely his discharge but a certificate to show that the bankruptcy was a result of misfortune and not of misconduct. From which presumably we learn how important it is that members of the House of Lords should be free from any suspicion of shady dealing in money matters.

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The merciful scaffolding is gradually disappearing from South Africa House, and this latest child of Sir Herbert Baker's imagination stares across Trafalgar Square, like Medusa petrified by her own ugliness. Meanwhile, Sir Reginald Blomfield continues his unconvincing attacks on Nash. I should like to ask each of these eminent architects a question about Carlton House Terrace. "Is it not better architecture, Sir Reginald, than South Africa House?" and "Is it not better architecture, Sir Herbert, than the projected scheme by Sir Reginald?" If, as I suspect, both these authorities answered in the affirmative, the case against Nash would evidently collapse. The newest project of destruction concerns Adelphi Terrace. This does not occupy an enormously important site, and the exterior has already been wantonly disfigured, though not beyond the possibility of restoration. I doubt whether the site, in any case, is suitable for another large building. But the point is that it is criminal to leave the reconstruction of London to the competitive energies of investors in real estate. Many areas require rebuilding on a carefully considered plan; others, like the Bloomsbury squares, require preservation. Until the Government or the L.C.C. are given further powers London will continue to grow more hideous and more inconvenient. A reasoned scheme is needed for London, as it is for agriculture and industry. In the present chaos of one clumsy building elbowing another, we find unrestrained capitalism made visible in all its brutality and wastefulness.

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I read with great interest Sir John Simon's statement that England had taken the initiative in suggesting that this country, the U.S.A., France and Italy should co-operate in prohibiting the export of arms to Bolivia and Paraguay. He took this statement out of the realm of the ridiculous by saying that if such co-operation could be reached in the small case it might be extended to the great. Unfortunately the figures of recent arms export to China and Japan suggest that both countries must now be supplied for many months to come.

* * *

According to the *Manchester Guardian* the Welsh Liberal Members who met in the House of Commons on Tuesday "did much more than form themselves into a group to act on Welsh affairs." They resolved amongst other things, "*that they would endeavour all to sit in the same place.*"

* * *

Substantial meals for hikers and photographers. Dark room for developments.—Notice outside Surrey café.

* * *

I approve of trousers for women so long as they turn up at the ends.—Lord Berners in the *Daily Express*, February 10th. CRITIC

A NATIONAL HOUSING CORPORATION

[In this article Sir Harold Bellman, speaking with special authority as President of the Abbey Road Building Society, follows up the argument for a National Housing Corporation put forward in previous weeks by Mr. J. M. Keynes and Sir Raymond Unwin. Other articles will follow by Mr. R. Coppock, the General Secretary of the National Federation of Building Trades Operatives and Mr. Sprague, Economic Adviser to the Bank of England.—ED., N. S. & N.]

THE uses of adversity will be sweeter than once seemed likely if the economic crisis germinates anywhere genuinely constructive thought which issues in really constructive action. The championship of a National Housing Corporation by Mr. J. M. Keynes and Sir Raymond Unwin, in the last two issues of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION and elsewhere, is of the first importance to all interested in the great problem of housing. The subject is of vast dimensions, and in this article I can discuss only certain broad aspects.

In brief, it will be recalled that the proposal contemplates the setting up of a National Housing Board authorised to borrow (possibly under Treasury Guarantee) say, up to £100,000,000, to make funds available for the building of dwelling houses, both directly and through all suitable existing organisations and to co-ordinate housing development on a national scale. The best tribute to the case which has been made for this organisation, perhaps, is that the Minister of Health has announced that this, among other matters, will be referred to a Departmental Committee for swift inquiry. The proposal for a National Housing Board is certainly far reaching; but drastic ills require drastic remedies. The shortcomings of the present regime are patent; Sir Ernest Simon and others have analysed them with devastating effect. At present, as I view the situation, there are two main heads under which such a Board may be justified. First, it may claim support as relating to a field eminently suitable for organised capital development, partly undertaken with a view to mitigating the effects of the economic crisis; the case for action on these lines was admirably argued by Mr. Reginald McKenna, Mr. J. M. Keynes and others in Addendum 1 of the Macmillan Committee's Report and earlier in the Liberal Industrial Inquiry, "Britain's Industrial Future." Secondly, (and this would be sufficient to justify action even if the first did not exist) the present position of the housing problem, especially having regard to the needs of the future, is ample evidence of the inadequacy of the existing system—or rather absence of system.

Take, for instance, the slums. It was recently suggested by one of my friends in a public speech that nothing short of dynamite would serve to write *finis* to this tragic chapter in our national history. It is one of the penalties of an advanced civilisation that the simple remedy is rarely practicable. None the less, it is both urgently necessary and, I think, administratively practicable to apply a dynamic of some sort. The Government's new Housing Bill does not, as Sir Ernest Simon has showed, make a direct contribution to the solution of the slum problem, though this is not to say that it will not fulfil the purpose for which it is intended. It is reassuring, so far as it goes, that an active policy is contemplated under the Act of 1930. There seems widespread agreement, however, that existing and immediately projected legislation will make only a comparatively slight impression on the slum problem. This is not because there has been a dearth of legislation. The reason must be largely sought, one fears, in the fact that hitherto housing has been too closely allied to politics; and the politician—naturally enough—rarely looks farther ahead than the next general election. The same influence has been apparent, to some extent, in municipal housing activities; at any rate, local authorities have shown marked variations in their sense of responsibility regarding housing.

This will therefore be widely, if not generally, accepted: the existing housing machinery has failed to function with tolerable efficiency. The question which naturally suggests itself is: What is to take its place? Clearly co-ordinated development is required. The capacity for taking long views and ensuring action over an extended period of time is equally imperative. The need for taking long views should be emphasised, for if the belief of economists and others that the future will provide the worker with more abundant leisure is well-founded the house will gain a new and more important significance. Can machinery be devised which promotes housing development embodying these virtues? A National Housing Board is more likely to be successful in this connection —to name no other—than any method yet tried. The proposal will, of course, encounter opposition; and probably not all of it will be founded on prejudice. Thus, it is important that its merits and defects should be examined frankly and the essentials seen in due perspective. The machinery of a National Housing Board has already been applied to other fields of economic activity. It is only necessary to refer to the Central Electricity Board, which has initiated remarkable nation-wide electrical development. Again, some of the fundamentals of the proposals have already been largely applied to housing. There is, for instance, the Public Works Loans Board, which has been in existence over 100 years and which lends to local authorities and other specified bodies money "for the purpose of works of permanent character and public usefulness." The advances are made from the Local Loans Fund. Furthermore, the Balfour Committee in its report, "Further Factors in Industrial and Commercial Efficiency" (Part 2) paid tribute to the efficiency of public trusts, especially in contrast with municipal effort. Finally, it is becoming obvious that the central idea of planned and co-ordinated development is less repugnant to national logic than formerly. The recent proposals with regard to the marketing of agricultural products, e.g., milk and pigs, are more than straws in the wind.

The National Housing Board is not likely to fail because of lack of funds. The question whether a Treasury guarantee would be necessary could be determined only after careful inquiry and exact definition of the Board's functions. Efficient administration is, as is reasonable, taken for granted. A number of institutional investors would, under these conditions, no doubt be prepared to lend it support. While building society opinion has not been canvassed, I see no reason why societies should not be included among these institutional investors. One of two things, however, would happen. Either investments with the Board would have to rank as trustee investments, or the Building Societies Acts would have to be amended to give the societies express authority to advance to the Board. It is apparent that while in some respects the societies might be co-operating with the Board in others they might be competitors. Clearly an advance definition of functions and apportionment of territory is indicated. Nor should this prove very difficult. For instance, so long as the Board is dealing with the slum problem it would not be competing directly with building societies; and this is the most urgent aspect of the housing problem and would absorb considerable funds. Again, the financing of *existing* property might be left to building societies and other agencies. As I conceive it, the chief functions of the Board would be (1) to attack the slum problem and (2) to supervise (and where necessary initiate) and co-ordinate all new housing development; possibly the Board might not have to provide finance for new building apart from slums except where it was not forthcoming in adequate volume or on acceptable terms from existing agencies. These, however, are details which could be settled only after long and careful inquiry.

Arrangements could also be made whereby it would add to our existing range of excellent "safety first" saving facilities and thus cater for the investment needs of the many small investors which the post-war period, through wages policy, the course of prices, taxation, etc., has created. Popular support is more likely in view of the current tendency of public

opinion in favour of home development rather than overseas investment. It should be remembered that the reconditioning of slum property, if not slum clearance, is not, as the records of certain ably administered housing societies show, entirely uneconomic.

On the other hand, I am not insensible of the substantial difficulties which lie in the path of the creation of a National Housing Board. These difficulties were summarised in general terms in Addendum 1 of the Macmillan Report (which I have already referred to) for it admits "the practical difficulties of initiative and organisation. It is not easy to devise well-conceived plans on a large scale. It is not easy to fit them into the existing scheme of things, even when they have been conceived, without all sorts of difficulties, frictions and delays."

Manifestly, all schemes of "rationalisation" are not everywhere acclaimed and successful; the history of Lancashire and the shipyards during recent years is a striking object lesson on this point. Nor is the organisation of the building industry without special problems. While there are a number of large units, which represent a state of the highest efficiency, there are a vast number of very small organisations, whose practice is less progressive than that of their larger competitors. The formation of a Building Industries National Council should serve a useful purpose in this connection, though much will depend upon the extent to which it is successful in embracing the building industry.

Slum clearance in London bristles with almost forbidding difficulties. We should make every effort to smooth the path as much as possible and, in particular, should make provision for a fair and equitable—which is a very different matter from over-generous—basis of valuation wherever slum or other property is compulsorily acquired.

The point to keep in the forefront of our minds is the urgency of the need for action; that this need coincides with most favourable economic conditions, owing to the fall in building costs and of the rate of interest; and that, as Sir Arthur Salter has pointed out, "The building trade is always a key-point in the economic structure, and any improvement there would quickly radiate." Above all, we should lose no opportunity of creating an informed—and even impatient—public opinion.

HAROLD BELLMAN

TWICKENHAM

IT is a difficult question to decide whether it is more enjoyable to see a dull football match won by one's own side or an exciting match in which the other side run through them. Until Saturday last I think I should have voted for the dull match. Every decent-minded man says that "the game's the thing," and some decent-minded men believe it; but there is something particularly endearing in victory. Most of us enjoy those games most in which we can indulge the riotous passions of a partisan. We are not mere aesthetes looking on at a moving picture. Joy of a very extreme kind and alarm change places in our breasts with the changing fortunes of the struggle. Journalists are sometimes blamed for using such words as "disaster" and "tragedy" about the collapse of a side at cricket; but is there any tragedy of Shakespeare's that stirs so many million men so deeply or any disaster in ancient history that is so acutely real to the imagination? Common sense tells us that we are fools to delude ourselves into a belief in the vast importance of what is after all trivial, but the Greeks, who founded our civilisation, wrote some of their most serious poems about games; and professors who deplore the modern craze for sport look on these poems as among the noblest works of antiquity. Remembering this I am inclined to think that the English should be criticised not for taking sport too seriously, but for not taking it seriously enough. Perhaps this is not true of the ordinary Englishman, but it is true of the great writers. This ancient passion for contest and victory is not only an ineradicable but a creditable passion. And victory is contest bursting into full flower.

Even without victory, however, contest can be very delightful. We are partisans only in half of our nature. Last Saturday I confess I went to Twickenham hoping with considerable eagerness that Ireland would win. I should even have been certain that she would win if everybody else had not been certain. My spirits sank, however, as I met man after man who prophesied an easy victory for Ireland. A Scottish ex-international said: "These English are a stodgy lot. You'll run through them." It is always flattering to be included in the "you" that will run through somebody, but I would rather he had been less enthusiastic. Another Scotsman said: "Ireland will win by at least thirty points." All the Englishmen I met assured me that Ireland was bound to win easily, and I doubt if there was another Irishman present except myself who held a different opinion. Even I, as soon as the game started, began to believe that Ireland was going to win after all. The Englishmen in their white jerseys looked the more gigantic team—perhaps an illusion produced by colour—but, as soon as Ireland kicked off, and a billow of men in green rushed up the field, it seemed as if the English sea-wall might be swept away by the stormy tide. For a time no man on either side was left in peace for even a second with the ball, but the Irish were making ground with irresistible rushes, and if the ball reached Waide he might make a swallow flight through the English team. Then suddenly came a penalty kick for Ireland and Murray had sent the ball between the posts to the vociferous joy of not the least vociferous of the nations.

It seems to me that a penalty goal is the most unsatisfactory score in football. Except on a rare occasion, as when Henley two years ago kicked an almost impossible goal for Oxford, there is nothing in a penalty goal to shout about. One feels that it is a little unfair that a side should be given three points as a reward for a mistake made by an over-excited opponent, and I do not know why the Rugby Football Union should not reduce the penalty goal to a two-point score. Much as I dislike penalty goals, however, I found strange and unnatural sounds emerging from my throat—sounds such as may have been made thousands of years ago by some savage ancestor in the jungle. For the moment that penalty goal, despite all my theories, seemed to me as entrancing as the overture to a Mozart opera. Partisanship was in rapture. And that was almost the last rapture that partisanship was given during the afternoon.

The Irish were still winning in the tight scrums, but the players could do nothing with the ball when they got it. If an Irishman got the ball, an Englishman was on him quick as Spring-heeled Jack, and the field was a swaying rough-and-tumble with neither side able to master the other. Then suddenly the ball reached Novis on the left wing and, with enough room to raise speed, he made for the Irish line. With the ball held to his ribs, and with his free hand ready to thrust anybody in his way into the middle of Sunday, he reached Lightfoot and swept round him as though he were dodging a post. There was only the full-back, Pratt, left to face him. Pratt prepared for a tackle, but Novis raced towards him as though he were a mere shadow in the sun, crashed into his arms, and, though tackled, rolled quickly over the line for a heroic try. The tackle was equally heroic, but as well might a schoolboy try to tackle a charging bull as Pratt expect to stop Novis in that destined moment. For some time he lay helpless on the ground, looking as if his neck had been broken, while his friends massaged him into life again.

After that the English began to play as if they were all Novises. They lost the ball in the scrums as a rule, but they were round the Irish so quickly that the loss seemed scarcely to matter. The struggle became fiercer and, at one moment, two Irishmen were lying wounded in different parts of the field with the game stopped. It looked as if the Irish scrum-half, who is a doctor, were about to be kept busier at hospital work than at football. "These Irish seem a brittle lot," said a spectator behind me, a little cold-bloodedly, but then he was only a spectator, not a player. I do not know whether these

injuries weakened the Irish team, but from that time on they had an air of incapacity. The English played as though everything they did had been prearranged by a clever general, while the Irish played like an army that had gone into action without a plan. If an Englishman had the ball he had a train of attendants, each of them prepared to take a pass; and there were usually more Englishmen ready to take a pass than there were Irishmen to mark them. If it had not been for two slightly forward passes, indeed, England would have scored five times instead of three before half-time.

It cannot be fairly said that the Irish played badly, except intermittently. But they seemed bewildered by a team that happened to be enjoying a spell of genius. The English continually gave us the pleasure of surprise. A few weeks ago, in the match against Wales, it seemed as if there were scarcely a man in England capable of taking an easy pass. On Saturday there was no more of this bungling than must be taken for granted in a game played at a terrific speed. The forwards gave demoniac passes from the line-outs, and the players behind were off like hares looking for gaps in the Irish team. And, just as Bradman at Lord's seemed to be able to find innumerable gaps among the English fielders, so the English seemed to make the Irish look like a team that was all gaps. The greatest moment of the match was when Novis ran through the entire Irish team, gap after gap, swerving round man after man, and scored one of those tries that rouse even the reluctant ranks of Tuscany to ardour. It was a try worthy of a Greek ode, and, if there were a living poet good enough to celebrate it, schoolboys would be reading about Novis in footnotes centuries hence.

When the score had reached a goal and four tries to a penalty goal the ground became strangely silent. Everybody except the players on the field realised that the game was won and lost. The Irish roused themselves to a last effort. Beamish charged down the field dragging half the English team on his shoulders. At one point the English full back, hard-pressed, ran back over his line and touched down; but the referee did not see this, and England was relieved. Two penalty kicks against England were given, but Ireland made no use of them. Hunt tried to drop a goal with the wildest of kicks. Then in the midst of a scramble on the English line Hunt once more got the ball and tumbled over the line like an acrobat for a try that was just a try and no more.

It was a good game in spite of the result. And I almost believe that I enjoyed it more than I should have enjoyed a game as dull as the England and Wales match that had ended in an Irish victory. Y. Y.

BEHIND THE BARS

"So God created man in his own image . . . and God said . . . 'have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth' . . . And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good." Has that dominion which, according to the author of Genesis, was given by God to men been abused? Thousands, and with reason, will cry "Yes." Are those who keep wild animals in captivity culpable? Who shall say? There are many people who regard every menagerie as a sort of penal settlement for innocent captives. They are heartsick at the sight of caged animals, imagining them to be, if not actually ill-used, at least terrified and longing to be free. Yet, speaking from close observation, I believe there are menageries where most of the animals are happy, or, as I prefer to say, because happiness seems to connote a conscious frame of mind, contented. The subject is not one upon which I dogmatise. Any assertion I may hereafter make on the subject is intended only as the expression of an honest opinion based on personal observation; and when I observe that there is more daily cruelty in our homes, our streets, our stables and our abattoirs than in all the Zoos in Europe, it is not for the purpose of diverting attention from the case of the captive animals nor to suggest that two or more wrongs can possibly make a right.

When we have a story to tell of the doings of our dog or cat, or, it may be, our cockatoo, it is difficult to tell the story without embroidery, because we cannot avoid projecting our personalities into those of our animal friends. We assume that the animal is feeling and thinking what we ourselves should expect to feel and think in the like circumstances; sometimes, up to a point, we may be right; more often it is likely that we are wrong. Similarly, when we see a captive lion or tiger pacing to and fro behind the bars of its cage, halting now and again to listen, or to stare fixedly into the distance, we think of ourselves in prison craving to be free, pacing to and fro behind the locked door, listening for some sound of the freedom without, gazing through the barred window at the square of sky, which is all that remains for us of the glory of the dome of heaven above the downs, the water meadows, the mountain tops, or wherever else our spirits crave to be. I believe the lions and tigers are thinking of nothing of the sort. In the aviaries of the birds of prey we see great eagles, vultures, falcons and lesser hawks, their wings half-spread, their eyes staring skyward, and, knowing that our spirits in their bodies would be sick with longing for the limitless ether and that black despair would weigh down our hearts because we could not batter down those barriers and be free, we suffer for them. How, we ask ourselves, do these cages compare with "the way of an eagle"? It is a hard question: but does the eagle himself ask it?

Do captive animals think and feel as we should in their circumstances? Are they conscious of deprivation and of thwarted instinct? Are they, in short, unhappy? We cannot answer these questions positively because we do not know what the mind of an animal is. Those, therefore, who keep wild animals in captivity accept a heavy responsibility; but, if they have sympathy for the animals, I believe their captives may be better off in their care than fending for themselves in the wild. The chief essentials of their well-being are cleanliness, comfort, good food, and, above all, I think, in the case of the great majority, something or somebody to keep them interested. Sympathetic people often complain that many of the animals have such a dull outlook, often no more than a blank wall. They feel that, like themselves, the animals would be much happier looking out on green fields and trees. I have never seen the smallest indication that any animal is interested in scenery, as such. When Bostock's lions were enlarged in their leafy dell, they explored it thoroughly—as is the manner of all cats—but having finished their inspection they devoted their attention exclusively, as far as I could gather, to one another and to the people moving about outside. Living, moving beings, not trees and flowers, hills and sunsets, are what interest them.

It is impossible in the space of a single article to examine the case of all the many kinds of animals in a great menagerie like the Zoological Gardens of London. But it is worth while to consider more closely that of a few of them, especially the large cats and the birds of prey, because they probably more than any others excite the indignant sympathy of the animal lovers, whom I call Zoophiles. If my information is correct—and it squares with what I should expect from intimacy with many domestic cats—lions and tigers and other greater cats, after they have passed the playful kitten stage, are seldom stirred to activity except by the approach of danger, the need for food and water or the desire for a mate. Nature has taught the young things to play so that they may develop their muscles against the time when they need their strength for other purposes. The adults sleep whenever they can and work when they must. If game is abundant their life may be fairly easy; if it is scarce it is hard, and in either case it gets harder as they grow older, as their muscles lose their elasticity, their joints stiffen and their teeth decay. It has been well said that the life of a lion or a tiger is that of its teeth. When their teeth fail them they must—in the wild—die a lingering death from starvation, unless a merciful tragedy hastens their end. In the

menagerie they are at least safe from the ordinary hazards of their natural life and many of them live to an age probably far exceeding the average of their kin in the jungle or the wilderness. Whether they would be happier living the relatively short, but free and strenuous life of the wild, however tragic its ending, none can say, but I find it impossible to believe that those which are housed in the London Zoo are miserable.

A walk through the lion house should convince anybody with an eye for an animal that its inmates are physically fit; nor is their general demeanour that of unhappy captives. Some may be seen pacing their dens, especially when feeding time is near, or they hear or see or, perhaps, scent the approach of a human friend. But they do not all behave alike. I cannot remember, for instance, that I ever saw the great Simba pacing his den. He is of the contemplative sort; he will lie for hours watching the passing crowd with the inscrutable eyes of a sphinx. If he were a man, I should guess that he found the multitude an entertaining subject of study. Abdulla is a more sociable beast and likes to be petted—not perhaps by everybody, for most animals have their likes and dislikes, which are often quite inexplicable. The two young tigers are seldom still because they are always expecting somebody to play with them. They are as gentle as kittens, justifying the native proverb which says, "A tiger is a dog till he is wounded, and then he is a tiger." Jock, the tallest lion in the Zoo, is the friend of all the world; so also are the two leopards, Bill and Daisy, though there are two persons they love better than all. I have named some of the most friendly, but most of the large cats have special friends for whom they look. A few are definitely unfriendly, but so are many human beings for whom no excuse can be found.

But because they have not to work for their living the captives may be bored and so they require entertainment, which in their natural state they would not need, and in general they look to human beings to entertain them. On Christmas Day the Zoological Gardens are closed. One Christmas Day I had the chance to enter them and I found the lion house open. I went in. At once every cat in the house was alert; they all came to the front of their dens and talked to me—that soft talk that one's own cat uses when it wants attention. They were not hungry—they had recently been fed. They were just delighted to see me, not for my own sake, but because I was a man and they wanted man's society. Recently again I found myself alone visiting the lions at Whipsnade. They were all four walking near the rails of their enclosure. I had never attempted to lay a hand on any of them; but I called the nearest and he came and talked to me. I put out my hand and he came alongside the bars rubbing his head against them and I patted his head and tickled his ears and chin to his evident delight. The other three came of their own accord and joined in the talk, jostling him and one another, but, though friendly, they had not quite enough confidence in me to place themselves alongside to be patted. So I ran round the outer path and they trotted along contentedly after me and when we halted they talked and yawned, seeming to say, "This is a dull day, my brother; when will the folk come back in crowds as they used to?" Here you have four lions in a large open enclosure, on excellent terms with one another, but delighted to see a man and a trifle bored because there are so few people about.

Of all the animals in the Zoo the birds of prey perhaps excite the keenest sympathy. To confine these creatures of the air, or, indeed, any birds, within the compass of a cage seems so obviously monstrous. Yet study of the birds in the Zoo strengthens the conviction I have long held that there is a closer affinity between birds and men than between men and any other animals, the dog, and possibly the domestic cat, excepted. Birds almost alone of the animals seek the society or the proximity of man, and they most readily adapt themselves to it even in confinement. The peregrine falcon, the goshawk and others are easily trained to return from the liberty of the air to the wrist of the falconer. Robins will nest among the books of your library, martins under your eaves, swallows in your porch, and instances could be multiplied of the confidence of birds in men—a confidence, be it admitted, too often betrayed. But let our remaining instances be drawn from the birds of prey at the Zoo. Within the last three months of last year two falcons of different kinds and three different owls arrived at the Zoo. They were all captured on ships at sea, one 800 miles from land, one 600, and the rest at varying distances. With one exception, a short-eared owl, none of them has ever seemed uneasy or restless, and they feed heartily. Recently a griffon vulture died at the Zoo after more than thirty years' residence, and he met his death through an accident. Not long since, on many a Sunday, one could see an old lady sitting on a campstool in one of the larger aviaries playing with the giant condor. The Bâteleur eagles come to have their polls scratched like any parrot. Here and there is an uneasy bird, but look at the name cards and see how long they live.

But is long life desirable for the captive? That brings us back to an earlier question—is the animal conscious of captivity, or does it unconsciously adapt itself to that condition? The normal reaction of the North American bison to the presence of mankind is instant flight, yet, when a certain lady enters the cattle sheds, at the mere sound of her voice, all the bisons begin to snort with joy. Outside they come at the trot to her whistle. Some are thinking mainly of carrots and other delicacies, but others are too excited to eat; they only want to be patted, scratched and talked to. In almost every house of the Zoo you will find animals greeting their special friends; nor is it always, or even usually, a case of cupboard love. Although, beyond doubt, some of the animals are untamable, even in their case I think one can usually rule out terror and consciousness of loss of liberty. The chief lesson, in my opinion, of the Zoo is that the animals look to us to entertain them and that if we play our part their captivity is not irksome.

But a question remains to be answered which some regard as fundamental. What right have we to interfere with the course of Nature since we cannot be sure that the animals are happy in captivity? Is not liberty, even though it be hazardous, the greatest prize of all? At the beginning of this article I quoted Genesis: to some that quotation may provide a sufficient answer; but I prefer, with doubtful logic, to reply with another question. What is liberty and are any of us free? The animals in a decent Zoo are relieved of the struggle for existence and are given a certain security in exchange for liberty with all its hazards. Are we prepared to contend that man was happier in the Stone Age than to-day? I am not prepared to deny it, for I doubt whether he could be more miserable. What inhibitions do we not tolerate for the sake of a doubtful security? Do we not endure Governments and irksome and often idiotic laws? Do we not submit to the slavery of the clock, to the daily routine of office, shop, factory or mine? What sort of freedom is this? There can be but few of us whose spirit has never risen in revolt against the shackles of modern, so-called civilisation and the perfidy of modern politics so that a cave and a flint axe and spear seemed preferable to security purchased at such a price; but how long has the fit lasted? And has the caged animal that concept of liberty which is the torture of man? I doubt it.

MORYS GASCOYEN

Correspondence

PRISON IN INDIA

SIR,—In view of the heavy sentences recently inflicted in the Meerut case it becomes interesting to examine the provisions of the Indian Prisons Act, 1894, which is still in force, and which reveals the humane aspirations of the Indian Government. Perhaps some of your readers can say how far these standards are approached in practice.

Section 57 declares that prisoners under sentence of transportation may be confined in fetters for the first three months of their sentence. This period may be extended if the Inspector-General thinks fit. Fetters are of three kinds: The ankle-rings may be attached by a 2ft. chain weighing 3 lb. or by two 20in. bars weighing 5 lb.—either of these may be imposed for three months—or by a *single* 16in. bar keeping the legs apart and weighing 2½ lb., which may be imposed for 240 continuous hours. By Section 56 the Superintendent of a prison has a discretion to confine *any* prisoner in irons for any length of time if he thinks it necessary for his safe custody.

For prison offences punishments include fetters and handcuffs, whipping, cellular and separate confinement, and the substitution of "gunny or other coarse fabric" for the normal prison clothing. Handcuffs may be imposed for a maximum of four days either in front of or behind the body or attached to a staple, for periods of twelve, six and six hours a day respectively. In the last case there must be an hour's break, and other prisoners must be present.

Prison offences include feigning illness, idleness at work, showing disrespect to a jail officer, refusing to eat the food prescribed (or on the other hand resorting unnecessarily to the night latrine), singing and loud laughing (which must be very prevalent).

6 Pump Court, Temple, E.C.4. DUDLEY COLLARD

SIR,—May I beg the courtesy of your columns to state briefly the case of Hugh Leicester Hutchinson, one of the Meerut prisoners? Mr. Hutchinson is young, well educated, and went to India in the first place to get journalistic experience. The conditions existing in India among industrial workers stirred him to help in the attempts being made to set up Trade Union machinery, and during the Bombay cotton strike he started a small radical paper. He was arrested, charged with sedition and conspiracy, refused bail, and kept a year and a half in prison until he prevailed on the authorities to take him to Allahabad, where Mr. Justice Mukerjee granted bail with the comment that it should have been granted long before. During the long period of imprisonment and trial his letters to his mother were severely censored, and he, with the other prisoners, was allowed only sixpence a day for food. Appeals for an adequate allowance were steadily refused by the prosecuting counsel. At the end of the trial in August, 1932, the assessors unanimously found Mr. Hutchinson not guilty. The Sessions Judge ignored this finding and sentenced him to a further four years' rigorous imprisonment.

An appeal against this grim sentence lies before the Higher Court at Allahabad, and beyond them to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. Mr. Hutchinson's mother, Mrs. Knight, is working to raise the money for this appeal and to brief a barrister to be sent out from England. If she is unable to raise the necessary sum, about £1,000, within the next sixty days, the right of appeal lapses.

I think there will be many to feel, as I do, deep indignation at the savage sentence passed on this young man. The chance to appeal must not be lost, and need not be if those who think as I do will send what they can to Mrs. Williams-Ellis, Romney's House, Holly Bush Hill, N.W.3, for Mrs. Knight. There is not very much time to spare. STORM JAMESON

139 New Abercorn Flats, Abercorn Place, N.W.8.

THE ANTI-HOUSING BILL

SIR,—Apparently Mr. Keynes is at one with Sir Ernest Simon in putting all the blame on the Government for the comparative failure of the Housing Act, 1930. I disagree with Sir Ernest Simon's contentions and deductions with regard to the housing question, and I venture to suggest neither he nor Mr. Keynes has a very deep knowledge of the subject, and certainly very little practical experience of the methods and effects of dealing with Clearance Areas under the 1930 Act. I think the short and most effective answer is to publish what has been done by the Bermondsey Borough Council under that Act.

19 Clearance Areas have been declared—16.3 acres with a population of 4,500. 385 flats (including a few cottages) have been erected, 248 flats are in course of erection, and £560,000 has been borrowed up to date for housing purposes.

Bermondsey is a congested, industrial, built-up and highly rated area almost in the heart of London, where the bulk of the labourers, dockers, etc., are practically compelled to live near their work, so that all the conditions were entirely unfavourable and the Housing Committee under the capable chairmanship of Councillor A. C. Starr have had a most difficult task to grapple with. It should be common knowledge that in Clearance Areas the overcrowding is greatest, but every family has been rehoused in Bermondsey except in a few cases where they were prepared to move into the suburbs. Bermondsey is, therefore, removing slums and abating overcrowding very effectively and with the least possible delay.

Now the value of publishing the above illustration of what has been and is still being done here must be apparent, because what Bermondsey has achieved under probably the worst possible conditions can certainly be done by other local authorities. I have no desire either to boost Bermondsey or defend the Ministry of Health, who have assisted Bermondsey very sympathetically in their efforts to use the 1930 Act. *The failure of the 1930 Act is not due to the Ministry, but to the lack of enterprise, capacity and foresight of the local authorities who have failed to use the powers conferred.* There can be no question that throughout the country, in the large cities and towns, there must be thousands of Clearance Areas (big and small) which should be dealt with, and if the example of Bermondsey were followed there would be a tremendous removal of slum conditions and overcrowding, and a boom in the building trade plus a considerable stimulus to all the other trades linked with that trade.

If the Government must cut expenditure on housing, then the new Bill affects this in the least harmful manner except in one respect, and that is, a grant for abating the worst cases of overcrowding should be preserved. E. GOFF CLARK

Town Hall, Spa Road, S.E.16. Town Clerk

SIR,—A recent report of the L.C.C. Special Committee on Unemployment throws an interesting light on Mr. Keynes's article last week. The report, which was called for by the Labour Party, shows that as a result of that Council's economy policy 8,661 of its own and its contractors' employees have been thrown out of work during the last fifteen months. On the assumption that for every man directly losing his job another is indirectly displaced, the total damage is 17,322 unemployed. Surely it is more than a coincidence that the increase in the number of those on the unemployment register in the County of London during the same period is 16,507?

This unemployment has been caused by the drastic curtailment of the Council's normal activities, especially in regard to the building of working-class houses. In October last year there were 3,017 L.C.C. houses under construction, as compared with 8,026 in October the year before. Every week the Housing Department of the Council receives no fewer than 3,300 applications for accommodation.

One might have thought that sufficient time has now elapsed for the economy hysteria of 1931 to have subsided and the disastrous consequences of its wholesale and indiscriminate application revealed. But alas, as far as the L.C.C. is concerned at any rate, its virulence is unabated. Its leaders have expressed their intention of endorsing the bulk of the Ray Report. The process of turning County Hall into an efficient machine for the creation of unemployment is to continue. GEORGE R. STRAUSS

The County Hall, S.E.1. L.C.C.

RENT RESTRICTION

SIR,—The hopes and fears which have been aroused by the Housing Bill, the adoption by the Minister of amendments, and the partial acceptance of the scheme for a Housing Corporation are apt to make us forget the progress of the Rent Restriction Bill, which is due to go through Committee stage very shortly. Yet it is of immediate concern to many thousands of people who live in sub-divided houses in overcrowded slum districts that this Bill—good as it is in many respects—should not reach the statute book in its present form.

In London nearly two-thirds of the families are living more than one family to a house built for single-family occupancy. The Bill provides that if the rent of a sub-divided part is under the Class C limit of rent it should not be decontrolled; but unfortunately, in a remarkably obscure clause, it makes the distinction between an occupier who holds direct from his landlord and one who occupies a tenement which has been made a separate dwelling by the head tenant. The practice in poor districts all over London, and other places as well, in the letting of tenement houses is for the owner to let the whole house to a tenant, usually

called the housekeeper, knowing that the housekeeper will only occupy a part and sub-let the rest. He does this deliberately to save himself the trouble of collecting small weekly rents and of dealing with separate tenancies; his house does not get split up behind his back, but with his full cognisance and approval. In this matter the Ministry seems to be misinformed.

If the clause remains in its present form increases of rent through decontrol will fall upon just those tenants which it is the object of the Bill to protect. There should be no legal distinction drawn between the landlord who lets out separate rooms in a house to separate tenants and one who lets to a housekeeper with the object of creating separate tenancies; the sub-tenants should not be affected by the behaviour of the owner and the housekeeper.

Thus the most common problem tenants have found during the history of these Acts has been the ascertainment of maximum rent; also the difficulties of finding legal evidence of "standard" rent, which many County Court judges have insisted upon, have been insuperable. This Bill leaves the matter in the hands of the County Courts as before, and the proposed determination of "standard" rent by comparison with other similar rents in the district is an insufficient remedy for the obstacles that tenants, or institutions acting on their behalf, have found in attempting to prove the rents demanded were excessive.

An interesting suggestion has been made, which has the approval of the London Council of Poor Man's Lawyers, that the ascertainment of "standard" rent should be put into the hands of the Assessment Committee of the localities on payment of a small fee by the tenants. The Assessment Committees have all the requisite knowledge, are expert in the matters of valuation, are dealing with property in just this way for other purposes, and are far more fitted to give an opinion as to the proper rents of dwellings than are the Courts of Law. If, therefore, the appropriate parts of the 1920 Rent Restriction Act are repealed—this is perfectly possible by amendment of the present Bill—much of the hardship caused by high rents in overcrowded areas would be mitigated, and expensive litigation might be avoided. Rents have become more burdensome as unemployment and poverty have increased, and the situation demands that as much consideration as possible should be given to the poorer classes of tenant.

BARBARA BLISS

44 St. George's Road, S.W.1.

SHAREHOLDERS

SIR,—Mr. Beaumont Pease told the shareholders of Lloyds Bank that though there may be an apparent conflict of interest between bank officers and bank shareholders, yet it was only an "apparent" conflict; really their interests were one. Does Mr. Beaumont Pease think we are all fools? If I, as a shareholder, receive a higher dividend, there is less money to pay my friend, the manager of our local branch; if, vice versa, the officers are paid more, the shareholders will generally get less; if indeed the higher salaries induce the officers to get more business for the banks, higher salaries may produce higher dividends; but for the life of me I can't see how higher dividends are going to produce higher salaries.

SHAREHOLDER

THE KENYA PROBLEM AND A WAY OUT

SIR,—It seems to me that there is a way whereby the difficulty of reconciling the conflicting claims of the African for land and of the European for gold can be successfully met.

I propose that the entire mineral rights in the auriferous area of Kenya should be handed over to the League of Nations. The gold therein should be valued at several thousand million pounds. The deposits should not be disturbed except for a few diggings from which a little gold might be taken and kept on the spot for exhibition purposes in order to create a feeling of confidence. The area should be mapped out into plots of convenient size which would be estimated to contain gold of a convenient amount, say one million pounds. Each plot would contain a flagstaff. The League of Nations would proceed to allot to the creditor nations plots sufficient to pay off inter-governmental obligations. In order to make a complete job the Anglo-Russian claims and counter-claims and debts owed by defaulting States such as the Southern States of the U.S.A. would be included.

The remainder of the area would be allocated to the nations of the world in accordance with their needs. The national flag would be hoisted on the flagstaff of each plot so allocated as a sign of ownership. The whole area would be known as the International Gold Reserve. Nations could, of course, immediately issue paper currency against their gold deposits. The natives would continue their pastoral and agricultural activities on the surface.

A manager from the League of Nations would be placed in charge with the necessary staff of accountants for keeping the flagstaffs in good order. Adjustments of payments between nations in future would be made monthly by hauling down the flags of debtor-nations from the requisite number of posts and hoisting those of the creditors. This might be done with some small ceremony such as the blowing of a bugle. Of course, where a nation had exhausted its reserves the Last Post would be sounded.

Mr. Montagu Norman might well be installed as General Manager in a convenient bungalow over which would float a yellow flag typifying the Gold Standard.

MIDAS

DISAPPEARING CURRENCY

SIR,—Your note on the use of stamped scrip requiring a new stamp to be fixed every fortnight which has arisen from the method of barter now in operation in various parts of the United States forms an interesting illustration of the system of a continually depreciating paper currency elaborated by Silvio Gesell in a series of works which began with his *Nervus Rerum* published in Buenos Aires in 1891. Gesell was a German millionaire who had made a fortune as a merchant in the Argentine and in 1919 held the post of Finance Minister in Landauer's short-lived government in Bavaria.

Gesell's theory of a nationally controlled currency depreciating by a thousandth part of its value every week represents an attempt to reduce money to the level of goods by making money perishable as goods are, thus depriving the holder of money of his privileged position over the holder of goods. He maintained that, under these conditions, the following results would be produced. No one would be willing to leave his money on deposit, and the velocity of circulation would be rapidly increased. There would be a constant ratio between the supply of money and the supply of goods, and the cause of boom and slump would be removed. The anxiety of savers to pass on the money deteriorating on their hands would in a few years force down the rate of interest to zero, and their savings would be returned to them as sums annually written off the means of production. Wages would gradually rise until they completely absorbed capital interest with the exception of rent on land, which would be made to accrue to the whole population by means of nationalisation.

Gesell was not a Socialist, but an individualist who, beyond introducing his currency reform, would nationalise land and leave everything else to the working of natural selection. His ideal was the ideal of the personality responsible for itself alone and freed from the control of others—the ideal of Schiller, Nietzsche and Landauer.

E. H. FOX

Fernleigh, Park Road,
Chilwell, Notts.

THE *BULPINGTON OF BLUP*

SIR,—Mr. H. G. Wells has replied with so much Christian charity to my rather petulant outburst after "being flicked on the raw" that I feel I must explain myself a little further. For we have both misunderstood each other. I never intended to suggest anything so foolish as that only conscientious objectors should take part in peace work. Rather I am delighted that Mr. Wells should now turn his immense energies to peace work, though I could wish he had begun doing so a bit earlier, when his authority, if it could not limit the duration of the war, might well have mitigated its moral atrocity. Is it not somewhat shocking that one of his intellectual distinction should find himself working for even five minutes in the same office as a man like Northcliffe? I may be neurotic on this point and I do not wish to talk like a prig. But the fact that so many persons of great mental power were willing to serve Caesar during the war has left on my spirit a wound which I know can never be healed.

My own misconception is, however, graver. I thought that I not only admired but understood the novels of Mr. Wells. Yet it certainly never occurred to me, nor I am sure to the vast majority of readers, that *Mr. Britling* was a pacifist novel, and I conceived the *Bulpington of Blup* to be not the Stendhalian analysis of an individual temperament but, like others of Mr. Wells's books, a novel of ideas in which certain sets of qualities were distributed among certain classes of the community, and I thought that Mr.

Wells unfairly attributed to one class qualities which were to a large extent the property of another, in which class, in some measure, might be included Mr. Wells himself. I am glad to know from the author himself that the scientific conchie did not owe his intellectual detachment to his scientific training; or the jingo his muddleheadedness and self-deception to his literary upbringing.

Mr. Wells comments on the obscurity which shrouds my own activities both during and after the war. Yet what else can be expected? I have neither Mr. Wells's great abilities nor his great position. The B.B.C. would never ask me to broadcast my opinions on international politics, even if anybody wanted to listen to them. The world press is not in my pocket, nor even the correspondence columns of the *Times*. I am as obscure and helpless now as I was then; hence I can only bombinate in a vacuum and urge on any likely young man I meet the paramount duty of refusing any kind of war service in the next war to end war that is so rapidly approaching. In their ensuing hour of moral isolation such young men will, I hope, this time be comforted by the support of Mr. Wells.

Yet in my calmer moments I realise that even this poor activity of mine is futile, as those internationally minded scientists in whom Mr. Wells believes have now, I understand, perfected a system of warfare which will turn Europe in twenty-four hours into a gas-infected ruin.

One thing must be said for aesthetes. They may be tiresome, boring, romantic, slovenly and hopelessly old-fashioned. They may even in their squalor admire Mr. T. S. Eliot. But left to themselves they are completely innocuous. Without the scientist we should have known no cannon balls more dangerous than coconuts, no warships more efficient than catamarans.

70 Elm Park Road, Chelsea, S.W. FRANCIS BIRRELL

Miscellany

THREE POEMS

LORD TENNYSON AND LORD MELCHETT

" Dost tha hear my horse's feet, as he canters away?
Property! Property! Property! tha's what they seems to say!"

Do you hear my Rolls Royce purr, as it glides away?
—I lick the cream off property! that's what it seems to say!—

THE PROPERTY QUESTION

In settling the property question between them,
bourgeois and bolshevist,
they'll merely destroy all property and a great many people
like the two lions who devoured one another, and left the tail-tufts wagging.
Let's hope there'll be more sense in the tail-tufts
than there was in the lions.

ST. GEORGE AND THE DRAGON

The more you tackle the property dragon
the more deadly and dangerous it becomes.
Whereas if you ride away and become deeply concerned in something else
the old dragon will dwindle down to the size of a stray cat, neglected,
whom some recalcitrant old maid will adopt, as a hobby.

It is all a question of being profoundly interested in property, or not.
And quite a lot of people are not.
But they let themselves be overwhelmed by those that are.

D. H. LAWRENCE

M. CLAIR'S NEW FILM

M. CLAIR's new picture (at the Academy) is full of charming passages, very witty, very gentle, very civilised, beautifully acted and just a tiny bit too long (this defect can easily be remedied by a little judicious cutting). Still, it will be interesting to see whether it has the same success as its predecessors. In the style of *Sous les toits de Paris*, 14 *Juillet* is without that film's emotional and well-sustained plot. It has neither the obvious satire of *Le Million*, nor the sociological satire of *A nous la liberté*. 14 *Juillet* is about nothing or about everything, about life, especially about Paris as a town and the millions of anonymous people who live in it; about its architecture, the interior of its houses, its cheap amusements, its streets, its fundamental good nature: or it is, if you will, the mere mirroring of a mood. Where *Sous le toits de Paris* was perhaps unintentionally sentimental, 14 *Juillet* boldly exploits a certain brand of sentimentality. Musset came in to my mind as I looked at it, and that side of Browning which is nearest to Musset—

We each studied hard in our styles,
Chipped each at our crust like Hindoos,
For air looked out on the tiles,
For fun watched each other's windows.

And I—soon managed to find
Weak points in the flower fence facing,
Was forced to put up my blind
And be safe in my corset lacing.

For spring bade the sparrows pair
And the boys and girls gave guesses,
And stalls in the streets look rare
With bull-rush and watercresses.

Though, of course, M. Clair, as a good citizen of the twentieth century, knows that it is more romantic to be a taximan than a sculptor.

It is essential to realise that in 14 *Juillet* M. Clair has endeavoured to construct a poem, a poem round the small man, the *petit bourgeois*, the skilled workman for whom, despite continual grumbling, the third republic exists and continues to exist for all its obvious incompetence. There is no moral uplift in this picture, as there was in *Kameradschaft*, for instance. Yet even more than that film it is the picture of democracy, the Parisian democracy, with which in all his pictures M. Clair has shown such immense sympathy. And this picture, more than any, films the city of Paris, which M. Clair loves as perhaps only a Parisian can love a town: a love which one must understand fully to appreciate this picture, even if one cannot entirely share it. To explain to us his love of Paris, M. Clair must take immense pains with his casting. His people, to look right, must look not so much like individual human beings as like symbols of this democracy: they must be not only individuals, they must be types of *petit bourgeois* life. Here we meet again some old friends, so immensely human, in M. Clair's company, and some new ones, who seem nevertheless so familiar that we feel we are jostling them on the pavement. They are remarkable by the mere absence of remarkability. They are inhabitants of the town. From our point of view M. Clair may suffer from some of the limitations of the Parisian, from the idea that there is something romantic about the mere fact of being a pickpocket. It needed the French genius to turn the *apache* into an instrument of propaganda. His heroine may be on occasion too conscious of the fact that she is *très gentille pour les enfants*. But these are small and most amiable failings.

Like another Frenchman before him, M. Clair *vole son bien ou il le trouve*. We see his shameless indebtedness to Charlie Chaplin, and, in a lesser degree, to Laurel and Hardy. Yet the result can in no way resemble theirs, so different is the temperament, so entirely French is it in its absence of strain, in its uncomplaining acceptance of life, and in the painter's contentment with the vision of what is, though we are never allowed to forget that life is a gamble and happiness

precarious. The steps that lead up the side of Montmartre, and which lie at the basis of this picture, have that friendliness peculiar to things which are a trifle squalid and immensely familiar; and the society described is one which we all understand and in which we all feel at home. For M. Clair's art is essentially *bourgeois* in the French rather than the Marxian sense of that most elastic word. It is full of the beauty which is in small things and the beauty of life in a small way.

There is, of course, much irony in this picture—the irony of the *voyous* who never succeed in robbing anybody; of the appalling mechanical piano in the café, of the concierge who wrecks one's life and revels in her handiwork; of the *bourgeois* family taking its day out. There is farce, too, of a drunken millionaire and his absurd smart restaurant. But in this picture the smart restaurant is the absurdity, the wen on life, which the democracy can contemplate almost without envy, knowing that more fun is to be found dancing under an umbrella in a *cour*.

I have had to write this notice, after seeing 14 *Juillet* only once, which is particularly unsatisfactory when the picture is one with so slender a plot and built up into a mood by a succession of continually varying details, of a kind hard to describe and not very easy to remember. Probably the better a film is the harder it is to describe, as the more pictorial is its message. One can more easily talk of its general impact on one's nature. I went away from the Academy feeling in closer contact with the human race, with a more intimate affection for the men and women who make up a crowd, and for the varied characters of ordinary people. 14 *Juillet* is a poem, if not of the common man, at any rate of the representative Parisian.

FRANCIS BIRRELL

THE PITOËFF SEASON

THE following is information of real importance to all who are fond of good acting:

M. and Mme. Pitoëff have given performances at the Arts Theatre Club of Strindberg's *Miss Julie*. The last performance of this play was on February 16th.

From February 16th to February 21st, they will act in *La Ronde*, by Arthur Schnitzler; and on February 22nd and 23rd (matinee and evening), they will act *The Doll's House*. From February 24th to 26th they will also give three performances of *Joë et Cie*, a play by Hjalman Bergman, of which I know nothing.

I have just seen *Miss Julie*. Mme. Pitoëff's performance in that part is something quite out of the ordinary. It is subtle and thorough, violent and delicate, moving and strange. It is a coherent character study too; and those who know the play will remember how hard it must have been to reconcile all the traits which Strindberg's anti-feminist passions and his "servant complex" have brought together in the person of Julie. Mme. Pitoëff shows, however, that it can be done; and the effect of her own personality on the part is remarkable. She disinfects it of that neurotic strain which in Strindberg's characters is apt to be so overwhelmingly strong. As you watch this Julie you do not say "This is a morbid, hysterical girl," but "This is a spoilt, wilful child; a pathetic, reckless, ignorant little devil of a girl, who is made to pay out of all proportion for indulging in the delight of exercising her power over a male, and for staging for herself an adolescent fairy-story of the Princess and the Humble Swain." This makes the play more interesting and far more moving; it makes the close tragic instead of pathological. When I compared my feelings on this occasion with what I remembered to have felt when I last saw *Miss Julie* in 1922, I was astonished at the difference.

One midsummer night (thus the story runs) Julie, the only child of a widowed Swedish Count, is left alone at home. The servants are giving a dance. They all stand in considerable awe of their master and approve of him. Of Mademoiselle they do not approve. She is erratic and undignified. She does not "know her place." She is at once insolent and free-and-easy. They attribute this to the influence of the late Countess who was un unbalanced woman, not suited to the position which her marriage obtained for her. She wanted to bring up Julie as "a Child of Nature." She also resented the male authority of her husband. She was, what Strindberg detested, a feminist. We learn all this when Julie tells the story of her life to the valet later on, but from the servants we gather at once, on the rise of the curtain, that Mademoiselle Julie provokes gossip. This very night she has been dancing with her father's valet, Jean, and has let him see pretty clearly that he pleased her. She follows him into the kitchen and, confident in the security of her social position, she proceeds to tantalise and provoke his passions.

Mme. Pitoëff in this scene makes exactly the right impression. Julie is before us in her arrogance, cruelty and condescension. We watch a hard little face quivering, now and then, with the excitement of playing with fire. She feels so gloriously safe, for when she has poked up a blaze in her father's servant she can instantly extinguish it by resuming the role of the untouchable young lady of rank. Julie is odious; the valet Jean behaves in the chivalric tradition. Julie certainly does not know "her place." His efforts are first directed (in spite of being highly flattered) to saving her from herself. Julie is delighted by his embarrassment and taunts him with being a Joseph. Gradually, with the help of wine, she comes nearer to the fire than she intended. It begins to scorch her when Jean tells her when he was a boy she was to him a vision of unattainable loveliness, the embodiment of a beautiful world from which he was for ever shut out. Circumstances precipitate the catastrophe; the dancers are coming into the kitchen and they will discover them together. The pair take refuge in Jean's bedroom.

Scene II early morning in the kitchen. They enter one after the other, and now their relations are reversed. Touselled, glum, and triumphant Jean exhibits a careless freedom in every movement. Although he was engaged to the cook, there is now a glorious prospect in front of him . . . with Julie's money and rank he will be able to climb! She is worn and racked with regret and fear. Watch Mme. Pitoëff's face; it is no longer that of a hard little minx, but that of a child, of a terrified child. To get nearer to him (since she must) she begins to tell him the shameful secrets of her parents' life; for that he only despises her the more. From being a fairy princess she has sunk in his eyes to a light-woman of no account (for Jean is thoroughly conventional), whose money will fortunately establish him as a hotel-keeper—first: he'll have to marry a whore, but he will make a fortune—then become a Count himself! But Julie has no money of her own. Well then, she must steal enough to enable them to bolt before the master comes back. (All through the scene Jean's abject subjection to his master is symbolised by the Count's long black boots, standing in the corner, which he must take up to his room when the fatal bell rings.) She obeys and goes to put on her travelling dress and steal the money.

Julie's romance has come down crash to the idea of spending her life as a housekeeper, and slaving for a man who disgusts her by his vulgarity and wounds her by his contempt. The cook enters and grasps the situation soon enough in talk with Jean: Mademoiselle Julie is going to steal her man. She puts a stop to that, and when Julie flinging herself desperately into an hysterical dream of possible happiness—the three of them will run away and see Europe together—Christine also punctures that. Julie has brought her pet bird with her, which she cannot bear to leave behind. Rather than that she would sooner it was killed; so Jean, in a fury of impatience, seizes it and chops off its head with the meat-chopper. That brutality releases in Julie a flood of wild fury and hatred. But what is to be done? The bell will ring any minute; Jean is stropping his razor pre-

paratory to presenting himself before his master with the boots. In despair Julie asks him what to do. "What would *you* do?" He hesitates; the bell rings; he hands her the razor; "Go to the barn." And she obeys.

I remember when I saw the play in 1927 I witnessed it in a state of mind which might be described as depressed equanimity. "Well, well, she cut her throat and her father rang for his boots and breakfast." But the effect of it upon me at the Arts Theatre was very different. The first time I could not forget Strindberg: his pleasure in sending a high-born minx to her death; his frantic insistence on the mean inferiority of women. The incident of the bird reminded me of his loathing of women's pets, the pug or chow in *The Confessions of a Fool*. His own hysteria glared through the play, the miseries of a hen-pecked Bluebeard. But as handled by the Pitoëffs all that disappeared from the play.

Julie became a bewildered child, and I have never seen on the stage a more complete representation in gait, gesture, expression, of the complete paralysis of the will by terror and regret.

DESMOND MACCARTHY

PLAYS AND PICTURES

The Brontës at Croydon

A new play about the Brontës, by Mr. Alfred Sangster, was performed for the first time at the Croydon Repertory Theatre this week. It suits the small stage there, all the scenes except two being the cramped sitting-room of Haworth Parsonage with a window looking towards the moors. The three sisters sit at a table working, listening to prayers read by their father, and talking when he is out of the room. The drama of their lives is overruled by his harsh authority; he outlives them all and is left sentimentalising over them and himself at the end. This part is effectively played by the author, but the figure of the old parson is hardly itself impressive enough to hold the play together. There are nine scenes, spread over twenty years, and each containing some tragic or comic incident: Bramwell coming home drunk; a visit to the London publisher. The real climax occurs at the end of the second act, with the death of Emily (well acted by Miss Nancy Hornsby), whose strange genius is hinted at with imagination. After that, the comedy of Charlotte's wooing by her father's curate, though enjoyable, emphasises the incidental nature of this chronicle play. A small cast acted well, particularly Mr. Alan Webb as Bramwell and afterwards as the Rev. Arthur Bell Nicholls. The play will run next week.

THE COMING WEEK

SATURDAY, February 18th—
Robert Mayer Concert for Children, Central Hall, Westminster, 11.
Rugby Football, Royal Navy *v.* Royal Air Force, Twickenham.
Orloff, Wigmore Hall, 3.

SUNDAY, February 19th—
Gerald Heard on "Group Psychology and its Value for Rational Religion," Conway Hall, 11.
William Mellor on "The Claim of the Unemployed," Transport Hall, Smith Square, 7.30.
Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Furtwangler, Albert Hall, 3.
"The Synthetic Virgin," Royalty Theatre.
"Oh, Hang," Westminster Theatre.

MONDAY, February 20th—
"The Glass Wall," Embassy Theatre.

TUESDAY, February 21st—
Eva M. Gilpin on "Our International Gatherings of School Children," Friends House, Euston Road, 1.20.

WEDNESDAY, February 22nd—
Harry Pollitt on "Communism and the Crisis," Caxton Hall, Victoria Street, 8.15.
B.B.C. Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Sir Henry Wood, Queen's Hall, 8.15.
Patrick Sloan on "In the Soviet Union with a Rucksack," Howard Room, Y.M.C.A., Great Russell Street, 8.15.
"The Princess in the Cage," Westminster Theatre.

THURSDAY, February 23rd—
London Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Sir Thomas Beecham, Queen's Hall, 8.15.

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18/2/33 PP 271

Current Literature

BOOKS IN GENERAL

GENERALSHIP, its Diseases and their Cure, by Major-General J. F. C. Fuller (Faber and Faber, 2s. 6d.), a bloodthirsty little book on the art of war, should be popular with ex-soldiers since the blood for which he thirsts is that of Generals and of Commanders-in-Chief. His thesis is that armies cannot be directed from distant chateaux or bomb-proof dug-outs, and that leadership in war depends on the physical presence of the General. General Fuller writes vigorously and well:

> The army having been bled white and gutted at Ypres was, in March the following year, thrown back in confusion by the Germans, and what do we see? Directly the British front is broken the Generals and their staffs pack up. As the enemy advances .... army headquarters go back so many miles .... and so on, day after day, dragging the front back with them, the tail of which is covered by weary rearguards of subalterns and private soldiers. What says the shade of Marshal Ney to this, I wonder? Is this an exaggeration? Well, I for one watched it, and it was a sorry picture which I saw: an army sliding backwards downhill, because, with one exception only, so I believe, no one of these higher commanders thought, it was no question of daring, for these men were not cowards—of rushing forward and kicking a moral stone under the backward skidding wheels.

And General Fuller goes on to contrast the British Commander-in-Chief, who lay inertly at Imbros during the Anzac landing, with Mustapha Kemal, who rushed ahead of the main body of his troops, up Sari Bair, to see for himself.

* * *

I mention this little book because I found it an illuminating footnote to a very interesting work by another soldier. *The Independent Arab*, by Major Sir Hubert Young, C.M.G., D.S.O. (John Murray, 15s.), is an account of the part which the author played in Arab affairs from the time when he learned Arabic in 1908 until the establishment of the Iraq administration in 1921. It falls naturally into four parts: first a journey from Damascus to Baghdad in 1913, when he accidentally met a young archæologist named T. E. Lawrence, at Carchemish, and spent a week there with him; secondly, service in Mesopotamia during 1915, 1916, and 1917, when he worked under Colonel Sir Arnold Wilson. The third and much the longest part is a description of his experiences after he was attached to the Sherifian army, during which he organised supplies at Akaba and took part in the great advance to Damascus, and was thus in frequent contact with Lawrence. The fourth part is a succinct account of the conflicting policies in the Foreign and India Offices from the Armistice to 1921. The book is therefore of considerable historical interest since it is by a strong-minded, independent man who took a large part in the events he describes, but its greatest value is as the testimony of one who watched Lawrence at work; in fact as an appendix to *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom*. Major Young is all the more valuable as a witness because there is no trace of the hero-worshipper about him. It is typical of him that though he realises that "Lawrence was quite mad . . . with the splendid madness which made old George II say of Wolfe, 'I wish he would bite some of the other generals, then,'" he continues to feel bothered and alarmed by Lawrence without realising that his own ideas are being altered by him and that he has been bitten too. And it is typical of Lawrence that he should make of a man who says: "I had never been taken into his confidence, and knew nothing about his political schemes," one of the principal agents in carrying them out.

> "They asked me to suggest someone who could take my place in case anything happened to me," said Lawrence, with his mischievous smile, "and I told them I thought no one could. As they pressed me, I said I could only think of Gertrude Bell and yourself, and they seemed to think you would be better for this particular job than she would."

The general picture of Lawrence tallies exactly with Lawrence's own account in *The Seven Pillars*, but it is fragmentary, and an amusing bitterness creeps into his comments.

> He never knew much about the regular army, and did not in the least understand how different it was from his own Bedouin. He had no sympathy with our transport problems, for he held all military organisations in profound contempt.

Thus when Major Young was organising a line of communication across the desert with dumps of forage and water for 2,000 camels, he was "to suffer one or two rude shocks" when Lawrence carried off his transport for another stunt.

> Relations between Lawrence and ourselves became for the moment a trifle strained, and the sight of the little man reading the *Morte d'Arthur* in a corner of the mess-tent with an impish smile on his face was not consoling.

For Major Young remained an orthodox regular soldier while Lawrence went far beyond the type of General for whom General Fuller is pleading. So far removed was he from the Duke of Plaza-Toro, that when his army failed to cut the railway he was first very angry and then went off to do the job himself.

> While the machine guns of the escort scattered the small Turkish post, the tender was driven right down to the bridge, where Lawrence laid and fired his charge. Then the small gay figure bumped airily away, perched high on the deadly boxes which any chance shot might blow into a thousand pieces.

On the very same page Major Young complains:

> As we neared Deraa, which was in full sight on the left front, I tried to forget that we were absolutely in the air, with no line of communications and no possible way of getting back.

Thus again and again one is struck by the fact that these professional soldiers, all brave men, cannot bear *taking risks*. Their education seems to have been designed to prevent them from ever imitating Alexander. Thus we have:

> . . . . the risk that I now know we ran, was the identical risk that I then said we were running, and I think now, as I thought then, that it was unjustifiable.

The risk was engaging about an equal number of the enemy. I suppose it is unfair to quote General Fuller's words: "safety first is like blocking every ball at cricket."

* * *

But more valuable even than this vivid supplement to that magnificent piece of literature, *The Seven Pillars*, is the last part of the book, with its clear exposition of the conflict between those who had imbibed the idea of Arab independence (from Lawrence) and Colonel Sir Arnold Wilson, who had set up the best sort of British administration more or less on the Indian model, in Mesopotamia—an administration so perfect that a large permanent army of occupation would have been required to make the Arabs submit to it. Two months after the British Government had accepted the mandate for Iraq, Sir Arnold Wilson telegraphed:

> . . . we cannot maintain our position as mandatory by a policy of conciliation of extremists. Having set our hand to the task of regenerating the internal government, we must be prepared to furnish alike men and money and to maintain continuity of control for years to come. We must be prepared, regardless of the League of Nations, to go very slowly with constitutional or democratic institutions, the application of which to Eastern countries has been attempted of late years with such little degree of success. If His Majesty's Government regard such a policy as impracticable or beyond our strength (as well they may) I submit that they would be better to face the alternative, formidable and from the local point of view, terrible as it is, and evacuate Mesopotamia.

Major Young regarded it as:

> unthinkable that we should evacuate Mesopotamia within two months of having accepted the mandate and I could not believe the only alternative was to proceed regardless of the League of Nations, to whom an account of our stewardship would have to be rendered. Lord Curzon took the same view.

In February, 1921, Mr. Churchill called in Lawrence as Political Adviser, and the following August Feisal was crowned King of Iraq.

MERCURY PATTEN

A NEW SERIES

Shakespeare. By JOHN DRINKWATER. *Duckworth.* 2s.
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Wagner. By W. J. TURNER. *Duckworth.* 2s.
John Wesley. By BONAMY DOBREE. *Duckworth.* 2s.
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Lives are cheap, this year : only two shillings per thirty thousand words, well printed and elegantly bound. It is a very brave enterprise by Messrs. Duckworth, and I hope that it will do more than deserve success, command it. But if these books are large for their price, they are small for what they must contain, and the author needs to be as ingenious an economist as the publisher if he is to pack into this space a great man's ambitions, achievements, foibles, and environment. He must avoid producing either a text-book with its cemetery rows of dead facts, or one of those distorted portraits which tell us more about the painter than the sitter. And as the series is evidently intended for a very large public, each volume must be judged partly by the impression it is likely to leave on a reader with little previous knowledge of its subject.

The first of the series is not the best. Mr. Drinkwater begins his *Life of Shakespeare* in the odious tones of the pride that apes humility.

> I am, I suppose, but an indifferent seeker after truth. The fact is that there are many passages in Shakespeare's plays that I do not understand, many problems of his dramatic career on which I have no opinion, and many popular conundrums about his life to which I can offer no answer. But it is the fact also that I do not mind.

Having presented himself as a hearty good fellow with no nonsense about him, he proceeds to make a Shakespeare in his own image, a happy Shakespeare, a man of prodigious power, of course, but rather commonplace and uninterested in experiment, whereas the evidence points, I suggest, to a tortured and even neurotic genius with a passion for innovation. He underrates the poet's obscurity, he passes over the Sonnets and *The Phoenix and the Turtle*, he makes no comment on the narrative poems that Shakespeare did write, and in compensation speculates about some that upon no evidence he supposes him to have written after his retirement. The silence of the last five years is a great mystery, but the explanation, I suggest, is less likely to be found in lost poems than in a psychological crisis analogous to those responsible for the long barren years in the lives of Racine and Rimbaud. Mr. Drinkwater loves Shakespeare but like some of the sincerest lovers he falls too easily into ready-made phrases.

Queen Victoria is the worst possible sitter for a quarter-length portrait. The importance of her life lies in her connection with an enormous series of historic personages and events, not in intrinsic qualities of character or intellect. To estimate the Queen, you must first estimate Melbourne, Disraeli, Gladstone, and a dozen others. Lord Ponsonby has made the best of an almost impossible job. He very wisely does not attempt to recount her life chronologically, but discusses her character successively in relation to her husband, her Ministers, Foreign Affairs, the Empire and democracy. He sketches admirably the Prince Consort, "unredeemed by a single vice," and in discussing the Queen's emotional exuberance points out that she "was as unable to pose as she was to fly." He manages to suggest very discreetly that she was mistaken in various of her opinions and actions, but the time has surely come when a greater outspokenness is permissible. The correspondence published since Lytton Strachey's book shows her in an unexpectedly unfavourable light. She never understood the steady development of democracy in her kingdom, her Imperialism was greedy, her treatment of Gladstone was unconstitutional as well as personally discourteous, her demands upon all her Ministers excessive and inconsiderate. Her shrewd sense, it is true, was never entirely suffocated by the clouds of perpetual incense among which she lived, and she always gave way before it was too late. But it is probable that the country would have benefited if she had been succeeded thirty years sooner by King Edward, who combined a great gift for diplomacy with an honest acceptance of the modern position of a constitutional monarch. Lord Ponsonby's book sets the pace well to its successors in the series.

Knowing Mr. Turner's vigorous style and his equally vigorous dislike of Wagner, I began his book expecting an entertainment as lively as an "All In" wrestling match between Giono the Gypsy and Norman the Butcher. I was not surprised to be informed that *The Flying Dutchman* was Wagner's masterpiece and (a natural corollary to this peculiar opinion) that the composer was not a great genius. I was prepared to hear that Wagner was "bogus through and through." But I was not prepared to be offered a Life in which his marriage with Cosima, his friendships with Ludwig II and Nietzsche, the *Meistersinger*, the completion of the *Ring*, *Parsifal*, and the whole Bayreuth adventure are crowded into the eight last pages. A book more misleading to any innocent person looking for a summary of Wagner's life could hardly be written, and Mr. Turner cannot be congratulated upon introducing into musical biography the drastic methods of Procrustes.

Mr. Bonamy Dobrée's *Wesley* is the best of this first bunch : it is a model of short biography in the ironical tradition of *Eminent Victorians*. Wesley's curious relations with women, his quarrels with the Moravians and Calvinists, his childish superstition and his childish conceit, provide a mass of comic material, which Mr. Dobrée has moulded into a work of art. If you attach no value to the religious emotion, Wesley is almost entirely ridiculous. Similarly if you have no eye for visual art, you could write a very comic life of Michelangelo—all this anguish about chipping holes in marble and putting coloured paint on ceilings. Again, you only need to be tone-deaf to debunk Beethoven most divertingly. A saint may be absurd but is unlikely to be merely absurd. The force of Wesley was as actual as that of a turbine or a thunderstorm. You may consider this force as ill-directed as Napoleon's ; it may excite hatred, but it ought also, I think, to inspire a certain awe. Lytton Strachey could deride the religious enthusiasm of an Arnold, a Manning, a Gordon, because in them it was alloyed with the ambitions of a schoolmaster, a prelate, and an Empire-builder ; when he approached the saintly Newman, his mockery ceased. Of course, Wesley was in some ways absurd, and a corrective to the panegyrics of his followers was required ; but would not Mr. Dobrée's study have been even better if he had allowed himself to be impressed for a moment by the spectacle of a man so completely possessed by the idea of God ? With this reservation, the book is enjoyable reading ; Mr. Dobrée has achieved his object delicately and entirely, and I know of nobody

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COLLINS

who has been able to assume the mantle of Lytton Strachey with so great a grace.

Reynolds is of a stature to fit very comfortably into the space provided, and Mr. Steegmann has made a workmanlike job of his Life. But he cannot make very interesting so smooth, polite and successful a character. He hints that Reynolds took an abnormally warm interest in his own sex, but without producing any solid evidence. He inclines, I think, to overestimate the paintings and to underestimate the Discourses. But the only grave fault of the book is that Reynolds's was hardly a "great life." Mr. Steegmann, with his wide knowledge and taste, deserves to have a more inspiring subject.

RAYMOND MORTIMER

NEW NOVELS

Shadows of Ecstasy. By CHAS. WILLIAMS. *Gollancz.* 7s. 6d.

One House. By JAMES COURAGE. *Gollancz.* 7s. 6d.

A Leaf of Laurel. By LESLIE MELLER. *Faber.* 7s. 6d.

The Witch's Cauldron. By EDEN PHILLPOTTS. *Hutchinson.* 7s. 6d.

The Hollow Field. By MARCEL AYMÉ. Translated by HELEN WADDELL. *Constable.* 7s. 6d.

Pebble in the Pond. By JOSEPH CABOT. *Hamish Hamilton.* 7s. 6d.

This Cleaner Wind. By ANDREW ANDREWS. *Cape.* 7s. 6d.

To begin with a few blameless dinner jackets in Hampstead and by the third chapter to have embroiled half Africa's naked hordes, is a convention of the thriller. And it is not long before the sinister half-caste stranger and the English renegade bring in the casket of jewels. Mr. Charles Williams is content with all these part-worn properties, but with a difference. He turns his thrillers into parables. His clues are metaphysical. The gentlemen of intellect war against the sinister conspiracies of imagination, ecstasy and sublimation. Light rises up against Darkness, Science against the Occult. Here is the difficulty. Mere Hampstead flesh may suddenly, irrationally desire

> To encounter darkness like a bride
> And hug it in mine arms,

but is painfully self-conscious in the act. One is reminded of Max Beerbohm's story of the gentleman who was cut by the Devil. Are not the dinner jackets of Hampstead too spotless for the Occult, would It not cut them?

In the ordinary thriller we do not mind much about such probabilities of characterisation. It is a matter of what people do, not of what they are. In the metaphysical, on the other hand, we are interested in beings rather than deeds. These beings embody a problem and they have got to live up to it, and live it out. If they do not there is grotesque incongruity, and even Mr. Charles Williams's sly device of laughing at himself does not take our minds off the fact that his people are out of the stock wardrobe. They are not born of the fires of abstraction.

No incongruities imperil the grey tense atmosphere of *One House*. Four daughters live alone in a large country house, their parents having died. They are the children of a colourless mother and an impressive, fascinating father. Catherine, the eldest daughter who has adored her father, makes a cult of his memory and, sustained by the idea that she and her sisters are the aggregate expression of himself, a kind of holy quartet which has only a group and not an individual existence, endeavours with quiet morbid will to force this conception upon her sisters. Catherine represents his religious and intellectual nature, Helen his domestic, Mona the sensual and Anne, the youngest, the spirituality which fused the whole. The conflict lies between the individuals and this mystical idea. Mona, the blunt, rebellious, hard-riding sensualist, is the spearpoint of life in enmity with this ideal unity of death-in-life. She in loneliness has taken a lover. There is a plot to marry off Anne to a young man home from India, but the one who breaks up Catherine's mystic world is Mona. At the moment when Anne has handed over the young man to Helen, who really loves him, Mona goes out to see her lover and meets a violent end. The conclusion is that Anne is carried away by the elder sister (who now sees her error) as if she were a chalice which held the precious essence of her father's spirit. There is a soft-voiced cruelty in this final situation, all the more horrifying because there seems to be no irony in Mr. Courage's intention. The four girls are delicately differentiated, the narrative is grave and grey, and the growing tension is all the more frightening for being half-concealed. Against the monotony of the quiet house the sisters sit, in a soundless electric air, straining against the design which has caught them. Mr. Courage excels in leaving things unsaid, but I am suspicious of an idea which requires the sacrifice of his most vital character to justify Catherine's spiritual greed.

A Leaf of Laurel is also a study in atmosphere; that human climate, the tropic of sexual preoccupation. A ring given by an Egyptian prostitute to an Australian soldier and carried home by him acts as talisman and guide into these brooding regions. Mr. Meller's claims for the ring seemed to me an irrelevance, a rather obvious device for holding together the formless study of a serious young man's adventures, spiritual and physical. But Mr. Meller has an effective impersonal manner and gravity, a way of making words carry a steadily accumulating burden of emotion without straining them, an excellence in incident rather than in continuous narrative. The final chapters have an almost unbearable weight as, without stress, they describe a still house in the hot summer days, occupied by a depraved and pitiful Paul Pry and his young daughter, who is entirely aware of her father's obsession and is unmoved by it. The picture of a scattered Australian township and its blank longings is unforgettably marked on the mind. The defects of the book spring from its lack of humour and perspective and the monotony of its obsession.

The Hollow Field lets in light and air. It is translated from the French and is the story of a feud arising out of the suicide of a peasant's wife. Again a story where atmosphere is important and where it is conveyed by the half-spoken. It is written in a pure rippling prose and has the deceptive inconsequence and economy of deep sophistication. Coindet's wife hangs herself, his father-in-law tries to palm off a second daughter on him, and failing, accuses his son-in-law of murder. The intrigue goes deeper. Coindet's wife was a good Catholic; if she was murdered she has a Catholic funeral, and that is a feather in the cap of the Catholic party of which Coindet is an opponent. There is a further complication when Jeanne Brégard piously and prettily thanks the Virgin for arranging the suicide, for now she will be able to marry Coindet; and again a complication when Jeanne's brother comes out of gaol and vows to kill Coindet for being an informer. Great peace in Coindet's soul and the brother's on the day they are at last free to kill each other without interference from the priest; immediate and tender reconciliation when they kill in error the innocent *garde champêtre* who loves everybody, agrees with everybody, understands nobody, and blows like an innocent bee from one brandy bottle to the next in the neighbourhood. What is the priest to make of these furiously Catholic people who never go to church, who never have an emotion, who value cattle more than life, and bury offerings of guinea fowl and flowers to nameless little deities in the woods—who kiss, murder and plough with equal pretty piety! As a study in peasant life *The Hollow Field* is a little masterpiece, imperturbably observant, grave, merry, cruel and delicate. The episode in which Jeanne and Coindet run off to the town is perfect; and again the occasion when Coindet strokes up his courage for the vendetta there is a delightful sardonic bacchanalia of a kind which is rarely written on this side of the Channel. English peasant novels usually belong either to the milky-bosomed or the deadly nightshade schools. *The Hollow Field*, admirably translated, is a refreshing change.

We accept M. Aymé's preposterous peasants. Why cannot we accept Mr. Phillpotts' Devonshire murderess? His touch is heavier. He is not sophisticated. He manufactures a melodrama and gropes to understand, and the more he explains the more he has to explain. I read many of the early chapters of his book with pleasure, enjoying the local aroma until suddenly I saw that I did not believe at all in the Lyceum removed to Devonshire. The mechanism was here but where was the vital, passionate, even the dispassionate *deus ex machina*?

This Cleaner Wind is the story of shipwreck, Thameside corruption and salvage, and of the kind that has a blonde vamp. The author is one of those pleasing experts in nautical matters who come completely to grief in dealing with human beings. The wreck is rather well done. *Pebbles in the Pond* sets out to show how a doctor's casual recommendation that an old man shall have a course of massage effects a whole web of people—a passable idea but ruined by an immense amount of irrelevant observation. It is a mistake to think that what all the characters feel about French trains, Channel crossings, English waiters, geysers, clubs and cocktail parties is a way of describing and differentiating these characters, for the opinions belong to one person only—the author. *Pebbles in the Pond* is trying to be a good, ingenious game of consequences, but it never gets below the surface.

V. S. PRITCHETT

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LAUGHTER, DARK AND OTHERWISE

The Torrents of Spring. By ERNEST HEMINGWAY. With an introduction by DAVID GARNETT. *Cape.* 5s.

The Noble Savage may have ceased to exist in fact—anthropologists have helped to undeceive us—but here and there in contemporary fiction he still manages to raise a nostalgic head. Lawrence romanticised the prancing Hopi; Sherwood Anderson, better known to most English readers as the object of Wyndham Lewis's scorn—*Paleface* holds him divertingly up to ridicule—than as a novelist who deserves attention on his own merits, in *Dark Laughter* performed the same service for the American negro. This story of an amorous lady and a recalcitrant gardener, an intellectual who has run away from his wife, pulsates with umbrageous cacchination.

It is the negro maidservants whose mockery pervades the narrative. "The two negro women in the house watched and waited. Often they looked at each other and giggled. The air on the hill-top was filled with laughter—dark laughter. . . ." Meanwhile, as we are informed with hypnotic persistence, "Spring was coming on fast in Southern Indiana." The point is that although Spring was coming on fast, Bruce's desires were laggard and autumnal, and the dusky explosions from kitchen and pantry were bad for everybody's nerves.

Certainly, they begin to affect the reader's. Mr. Hemingway who, till *Dark Laughter* saw the light, had been to some extent under the spell of Anderson's method—Anderson had sponsored his first book—was apparently both enchanted and disabused. He sat down and threw off a short parody; *The Torrents of Spring*, published in 1925, caricatures Anderson's naive romanticism and his various irritating, yet occasionally persuasive, verbal tricks. It reproduces his habit of repetition. The same Spring wind blows insidiously through his tale; his characters, just as meaty and inarticulate, Yogi Johnson and the alcoholic Scripps O'Neil, struggle with their own formless, but portentous, thoughts. Like flies, newly escaped from a bath of molasses, they drag their inchoate musing across the page:

> Yogi Johnson stood looking out of the window of a big pump-factory in Michigan. Spring would soon be here. Could it be that what this writing fellow Hutchinson had said, "If winter comes can spring be far behind?" would be true again this year? Yogi Johnson wondered. Near Yogi at the next window but one stood Scripps O'Neil, a tall, lean man with a tall, lean face. . . .

Scripps O'Neil, it may be as well to explain, is the reflection of a character called Sponge Martin:

> Time very soon to push the windows up. Spring would be coming soon now. . . . Sponge chewed tobacco and had a wife who got drunk with him sometimes on paydays. . . . When he spoke of the other child, playfully called Bugs Martin, Sponge got a little upset. She had been a rip-terror right from the start. . . . Sponge's old woman was all right. When she and Sponge were out that way after catfish, and they had both taken five or six drinks of "moon," she was like a kid. . . . When the old woman was a little lit up and acted like a kid it made Sponge feel like that way too.

Scripps had a domestic background of a similar pattern:

> Scripps O'Neil had two wives. As he looked out of the window, standing tall and lean and resilient with his own tenuous hardness, he thought of both of them. One lived in Mancelona and the other lived in Petoskey. . . . With his wife in Mancelona Scripps often got drunk. When he was drunk he and his wife were happy. They would go down to the railway station and walk out along the tracks, and then sit together and drink and watch the trains go by. They would sit under a pine tree on a little hill that overlooked the railway and drink. . . . Scripps had a daughter whom he playfully called Lousy O'Neil. Her real name was Lucy O'Neil. One night, after Scripps and his old woman had been out drinking on the railroad line for three or four days, he lost his wife. He didn't know where she was. When he came to himself everything was dark. He walked along the railroad track towards town. The tires were stiff and hard under his feet. He tried walking on the rails. He couldn't do it. He had the dope on that all right. . . . Finally he came to where he could see the lights of the switch-yard.

It will be noticed that not only does Hemingway's parody almost lovingly preserve the tone of the original—one quotation is not more ludicrous than the other—but that, particularly in the last lines of the second passage, the parodist is poking fun at his own style. Indeed, this is half the charm of *The Torrents of Spring*; besides being a satire on Sherwood Anderson, good-humoured if mercilessly acute, it is also a satire on Anderson's method as Hemingway himself has seen fit to adapt it. Thus, Yogi is much perturbed by his lack of virility:

> Yogi was worried. There was something on his mind. It was spring, there was no doubt of that now, and he did not want a woman. He had worried about it a lot lately. . . . He couldn't explain it to himself. He had gone to the Public Library and asked for a book the night before. He looked at the librarian. He did not want her. . . . At the restaurant where he had a meal ticket he looked hard at the waitress who brought him his meals. He did not want her, either. He passed a group of girls on their way home from High School. He looked carefully at all of them. He did not want a single one.

—cogitations which inevitably take one back to a story, entitled *Soldier's Home*, printed in Hemingway's first book of tales:

> He liked the girls that were walking along the other side of the street. . . But the world they were in was not the world he was in. . . It was not worth it. . . . He would not go through all the talking. He did not want one badly enough. . . . It was not worth it. Not now when things were getting good again.

Yogi is a more romantic creature than Krebs. Hemingway, except in *The Torrents of Spring*, where the wild distant war-whoops of mysterious Indians take the place of the dusky laughter of negro serving-maids, lays on the "atmosphere" with greater delicacy; but his characters are inclined to express their deepest feelings in the characteristic Andersonian telegraphese.

Hemingway succeeds and Anderson fails. The same masculine intermittences of thought and emotion, by Alfred Jingle out of Leopold Bloom, with a touch of the modern collar-advertisement, are to be found in the novels and stories of both writers. They suggest conjurors perpetually rolling up their sleeves; there is nothing "literary" or faked about the show; they are just "regular fellows" doing their stuff. In Anderson, this attitude is immensely tiresome; in Hemingway, it must be admitted, on the other hand, the effect obtained—vivid, trenchant, and abrupt—usually justifies the means employed to compass it. So brilliant is Hemingway's gift of narrative—he is perhaps the finest story-teller now writing in English—that we can disregard the underlying pose.

Torrents of Spring, of course, is no more than a trifle. Nevertheless, for those who have covered the ground, have read *In Our Time* and *Men Without Women*, and caught from *Paleface* an echo of *Dark Laughter*, it is a long-expected and highly entertaining book. Mr. Garnett adds a sympathetic foreword. He points out, as I have indicated above, that Hemingway's laughter is double-edged. This *jeu d'esprit* is a good-tempered essay in criticism, but has an astringency much needed at the present time.

PETER QUENNELL

LOOK OUT

What Would be the Character of a New War? *Gollancz* 5s.

If the title of this book does not put the most important question in the world to us, it does so to our children, and the publisher is to be congratulated on his enterprise in issuing a cheap reprint of a work which passed almost unnoticed a year ago, until it was reviewed in these columns. In order to provide material for a study of national security the Inter-Parliamentary Union invited a number of able people of many different nationalities to contribute essays on particular aspects of war in which they are specialists, and this book is the result. It will be interesting to see how much security the Committee of the Inter-Parliamentary Union is able to deduce from it. In the meantime anyone who has strained his eyes in trying to pierce the smoke screen behind which the battle of Disarmament is proceeding will find comfort here, even if it be but the cold comfort of a menacing reality.

In the busy layman the discreet verbal gymnastics of the Genevan struggle produce too often a kind of mental paralysis. He personally would perhaps welcome the abolition of armaments, but if all these important people, after earnest exploratory operations, can only produce formulae which are rarely intelligible to him and never acceptable to the national interests of one or other of the Powers, the subject is clearly beyond his wits. He shrugs wearily away from a problem which seems insoluble. And so perhaps it is, approached with the preoccupations and attacked by the methods in force at Geneva. Yet he may feel in his bones that beneath this heaving mountain of international conference there lies, if only he could get at it, a seizable collection of ascertainable fact, leading to a reliable chain of deduction, and so,

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H. V. HODSON

With a preface by Sir Arthur Salter

7/6

FABER & FABER

perhaps, to a firm personal opinion and a stimulus to action. A patient perusal of this book will show him that he is right, without leaving him with the suspicion of being tricked by pacifist propaganda. This work is not the considered report of a pacifist society. It is primarily a data book compiled by nineteen authors, of whom Sir Norman Angell, Major-General Fuller and Major Lefebure will be best known to English readers, and of the rest six hold military titles in Germany, France and Sweden. The contributors are of widely divergent outlook and standing, their common qualifications being special knowledge, honest application to the facts, and, with few exceptions, a notable power of exposition. Thus the book has no artificial unity. There are, in fact, several cases of overlapping in which serious differences of opinion are expressed. For instance, the future role of the air arm is discussed in several papers, and there is no agreement on two vital points, (1) the initial use of aircraft on the outbreak of war, and (2) the quick convertibility of civil aircraft to military use. The first of these questions is psychologically difficult, and Professor Joergensen, whose survey of the effect of war on mentality and morale is masterly, gives no help here. Yet this collection of essays has a most striking natural unity, a unity which is the more terrible because of the differences of outlook and opinion which they display. General Fuller in his elegant treatment of tactical evolution, and Dr. Gertrud Woker in her vehement exposure of the horrors of chemical and bacteriological warfare are culturally worlds apart, but they both end on a note of warning. There is hardly an essay in this volume which does not end by spelling, with varying emphasis, the word ruin. It would be possible after reading one of these articles in a magazine to fob off its significance with the reflection that after all that is only part of the business: there is another side to it: it is not so bad as all that. The honest reader of this book has no such easy escape. Here is a pretty comprehensive anatomy of the vile body of war. And it is, in fact, as bad as all that.

Here and there in these pages the Genevan background moves to the front, and one is permitted to compare the frailty of the safeguards which have been proposed and adopted with the solidity of the forces to which they are opposed. From such an angle any partial solution of the problem seems highly improbable; the connection between the peaceful citizen and those who are so valiantly representing his "interests" seems farcically remote. And yet, if only a half of what is written in this book is true, and if an intelligent child could really grasp it, he would certainly exclaim "Well, if it's like that, why don't you stop it, stupid? I would." It is a simple answer; it may be the answer of a simpleton; but possibly we shall come to it in the end.

TRADE AND TARIFFS

An Introduction to International Trade and Tariffs. R. A. HODGSON, B.Com. *Pitman.* 6s.

Mr. Hodgson's book should be greeted with relief by all those who have suffered from an excess of economic arguments; for it is a full, conscientious and up-to-date statement of the theory of international trade, of the effects of tariffs, and of their constitution and working in theory and practice, and it is as impartial as a chemical analysis. It is by no means an ideal specimen of its kind. Mr. Hodgson, although reasonably clear, cannot be said to have heaven-sent gifts of exposition. He is unnecessarily text-bookish; and he writes far too often in what Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch calls jargon. There are omissions, of which more later; and much of the ground, as Mr. Hodgson is the first to admit, has been competently though less compendiously covered already. But the paramount virtue remains; never once is there a falling off from that rigid standard of scientific impartiality, so often urged, so rarely attained, by other and better-known economic writers.

The most material shortcoming in this work is implicit in the title. Tariffs no longer stand alone, or even pre-eminent, among protective measures. To end a study of the mechanism of international trade as soon as the various tariff systems of the world have been described, classified, analysed and evaluated, is to leave a thoroughly incomplete picture of the conditions under which that trade is in fact carried on. Exchange restrictions might, as abnormal emergency measures, be reasonably dismissed with a paragraph; they do not get even that. Quotas, on the other hand, surely deserve Mr. Hodgson's attention; the more so as, while much of his chapters on tariffs merely consist in more precise statement of matters having some place in most people's general knowledge, quotas and their operation are as yet an unexplained mystery to the man in the street. Yet under the Ottawa agreements they are evidently going to play a major part in determining the nature and direction of British foreign trade, and they have already for some time been a trusted instrument of economic defence among European States. Another omission is Russia. Admittedly the U.S.S.R. appears to carry on its foreign trade in accordance with no known economic laws, and might therefore be held to fall outside the scope of a work such as this, which is concerned with explaining the normal. But here is a mechanism of international trade quite different from that working in other parts of the world, and whose work is the subject of the most rabid controversy. Some discussion would have been at least interesting.

However, it does not do to ask too much. With all Mr. Hodgson's shortcomings, his book remains one for which the serious general reader and the student of economics will alike be grateful, and to which all those who value clear thinking on a confused and heated issue will heartily wish a wide circulation.

EVERY AUTHOR HIS OWN LAWYER

The Marketing of Literary Property. By G. HERBERT THRING. *Constable.* 7s. 6d.

This is rather an alarming book. But to appreciate Mr. Thring you must remember that he was secretary to the Society of Authors—an unenviable job, one would imagine, though Mr. Thring must have got some fun out of it, as Mr. Bernard Shaw points out in his generous introductory letter, to have stuck it for so long. For thirty years Mr. Thring has dealt "incorruptibly and implacably," as Mr. Shaw says, with inefficient, greedy and sometimes dishonest publishers, editors and agents; innumerable authors with a grievance; the difficulties of contracts and international copyright law; and all the questions and disputes chronic in so complicated a business. Mr. Thring, let it be said, has emerged from the ordeal with credit. His book reflects, not surprisingly, the character of his past work. It deals with copyright law, contracts for the publication of books, prize competitions, agents, and the legal position of authors in all circumstances; with emphasis throughout on the legal pitfalls which surround the unwary author. The title, however, is misleading. Authors who buy the book expecting to be told how to market their wares to the best advantage will be disappointed. Beyond advising writers to join the Society of Authors and thus "obtain some *minor* (my italics) but essential details as to the standing and reputation of publishers, editors and proprietors, costs of production," etc., Mr. Thring pins his faith to publishers' advertisements and card indexes.

> Before the legal forms and contracts are discussed, it is first essential that the author should discover the publishers most likely to produce his work. It is not difficult to ascertain from the numerous advertisements that appear in all (*sic*) the daily and weekly papers who are the publishers of educational, medical, sporting, technical, legal, etc., etc., books. The publishers of novels are almost as many as there are firms on the market.
>
> It might be worth while for an author to make a card index, if he desires to be meticulous, adding notes as to each publisher collected from the kind of novel, or other book, that he may be advertising.

It is difficult to reconcile this with Mr. Thring's statement on page 1 that "this book will deal entirely, from its financial standpoint," with literary and associated property. If Mr. Thring had put "legal" for "financial" it would be understandable. But Mr. Thring makes it plain that he is not concerned with commercial success. Serial sales, which for many writers are the biggest source of income, are dismissed as "minor" rights, and all that Mr. Thring can suggest to the author under the heading "Markets" is

> to pick up any paper, magazine or similar periodical he may see at any time, in any place, look it through carefully, and note what kind of article, essay, story or verse it may publish, with special reference to the length in thousand words, and then proceed to keep a simple card index.
>
> The author will find that in a very short time he has compiled a most valuable register. Notes as to the name of the editor, his business or unbusiness-like habits, the price paid and other important details may be added from time to time as his experience and the markets increase. . . . Marketing involves no serious brain effort and can be done at odd times.

This is inadequate, to put it mildly, but Mr. Thring's preceding advice to authors on the subject of approaching editors is a striking

A MAN AND HIS PIPE

"I'm so glad to see you've taken to a pipe, dear."

"Good for you, darling. But why this rush of joy to the maternal head?"

"Oh, it's just that the nicest men I know enjoy their pipes . . . What kind of tobacco is that?"

"Three Nuns."

"I thought I recognised it. Your father would never smoke anything else."

THREE NUNS

the tobacco of curious cut—1s. 2½d. an ounce

STEPHEN MITCHELL & SON, *Branch of the Imperial Tobacco Co. (of Great Britain and Ireland), Ltd.*, 36 ST. ANDREW SQUARE, GLASGOW

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example of how advice can be legally sound but quite impractical. I am afraid that writers who innocently obey Mr. Thring's instructions will get short shrift in the literary market. On his own ground he is a safer guide. His presentation of copyright law is straightforward and comprehensive. The anomalies and technicalities of U.S. copyright are conveniently set out. The chapter entitled "Publication in Book Form" examines different forms of contract between author and publisher. Here Mr. Thring the lawyer is in his element.

Unfortunately, he is apt to overlook other and not less important considerations. (In this chapter, by the way, there are strange references to the "ordinary 6s. book." I wonder if Mr. Thring is thinking of the pre-war novel?) As Mr. Stanley Unwin points out in *The Truth About Publishing* (Mr. Thring does not even mention this classic) a bad agreement with a good publisher is better than a perfect agreement with a bad one.

Mr. Thring's attitude is revealed in this significant statement: "Termination clauses are the most important clauses in any form of contract." This is a lawyer's *ipse dixit*. The integrity of a publisher and his ability to sell books are surely more important considerations. Marketing the fruits of authorship is not an affair of legal documents.

Authors and publishers both want the successful publication of books, and, odd though it may seem to Mr. Thring, many of them contrive to rub along quite happily together. Disputes are relatively few. It is Mr. Thring's professional misfortune that he has been obliged to listen daily to the discords rather than the general harmony, and his half-hearted attempts to be fair to publishers do not carry conviction. His book is evidence of his imperfect acquaintance with the publishing point of view. As an example, I take his hostility to the publisher's claim on a novelist's future books. He overlooks the value—to the author—of continuity of publication under the same imprint, and the basic reason for the "option" clause, namely assurance to the publisher that a rival will not reap where he has sown. The publisher who takes the risk of producing an author's early and for the most part unprofitable work is morally entitled to the offer on fair terms of the author's maturer books. Mr. Thring's book will be valuable as a legal guide to the experienced—I am tempted to say to the litigious—author. But it should be read as an appendix to *The Truth About Publishing* and Mr. Frank Swinnerton's admirable *Authors and the Book Trade* if the problems of author and publisher are to be seen in anything like true perspective.

MICHAEL JOSEPH

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It is the Westminster Bank's policy to popularize its services by issuing simply worded accounts of various ways in which it is glad to be used. These bright covered little leaflets are conspicuous in any branch of the Bank, and may be taken freely. They already comprise '39 Advantages of an Account', 'Points before Travelling', 'Securities', 'The Saving Habit', 'Wills', 'Income Tax', and others

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MR. CHURCH'S NOVEL

The Prodigal Father. By RICHARD CHURCH. *Dent.* 7s. 6d.

What is one to make of *The Prodigal Father*? It will please the majority of sensitive people, who can enjoy a dramatic story quietly told. It will suggest little, on the other hand, to eyes which have become dulled to delicacy of colour and old-fashioned lighting effects by the powerful crudities of the films. Cinema technique, whether good or bad, has affected Mr. Church hardly at all. Fashion may approve *The Prodigal Father* for its quaintness of phrase, its unashamed sentiment, and its individualistic elaborations and reticences, while the more forthright critics may be annoyed by these particular idiosyncrasies, which distract attention from the story and muddle the final impression. The framework of the book—the contrast of character and philosophy between pious wife and musical husband, between happy-go-lucky father and morbidly serious son—is excellent. Prodigal fathers are certainly fertile; and it is strange that Mr. Church should have seized upon first rights in the breed. Without shirking serious issues, he has decorated his invention with a number of entertaining scenes. At one time he describes the comic-pathetic flight of the father from funerals, women and responsibility in general (even when he is drunk, and she is dying, our sympathies go to George and not to Lill); at another he introduces the quartet party, meeting busily in a library at night and scowling at the benevolent Jew who pays their gas-bill. The skeleton of the book is sound; the integumenta have a fascination while one reads; but it must reluctantly be admitted, as the fascination wanes, that some necessary component is missing; is it the tendons, or the arteries, or the blood-stream itself which is weak? The thoughts and feelings of the characters do not quite "get over."

It would be reasonable to blame Mary, who is a kind of angel-harpy working to reconcile father and son. Her vitality drains the book; and because she is of a different order from the other characters she puts the story out of focus. Mr. Church is exceptionally free from the baser forms of educational violence; he never actively insists on a point of view, but he sends Mary out as his prophet. Not outspokenly (she is not a talker); but as she sets her face implacably against every influence which balks individual freedom, and uses all her power to further the processes of growth, so, one feels, would Mr. Church. Symbolic characters are kittle cattle; however you clothe them, they look odd among the Lills and Roberts and Georges. The propagandist urge has made Mary a trifle indigestible; it has thrown sand in the eyes of even so sensitive a writer as Mr. Church; and as usual the propagandist urge has upset the balance of the book. Few novels escape this fate; and there is so much good stuff in *The Prodigal Father* that it is pernickety to complain.

SHORTER NOTICES

Culture and Environment. By F. R. LEAVIS and DENYS THOMPSON. *Chatto and Windus.* 3s. 6d.

This "training in critical awareness" is intended primarily for schools, and for study circles and debating societies. The authors attempt, by means of examples and comment, to teach a critical attitude towards the standardisation of life and thought produced by newspapers, films, wireless and advertisement. They show by quotation from George Sturt's *The Wheelwright Shop*, and from the Lynds' *Middletown*, the change in vitality which has occurred since the disappearance of the craftsman. Every intelligent person will agree with the main object of the book. But there is a strange primness in the method of attack; advertisements are quoted and the reader is put through a series of examination questions, of which number 10 is a fair sample:

> Explain and illustrate the use of valets, butlers and "superior"-looking menservants in advertisements.

The child or adult who will solemnly sit down to answer that is in danger of accepting a culture as devitalised as the newspaper-minded mentality which it attacks. The "classification" of advertising idiocy advised by the authors is a complete waste of time for anyone who has once understood the main points of the book; for those who have not, it will be a boring and probably useless exercise. It is a pity that Messrs. Leavis and Thompson should have weakened the effect of their criticism by pedantry, but their book, in the hands of schoolmasters who can combine intelligence with common sense, should be exceedingly valuable.

Mr. Pernickety

An elderly gentleman stood in the doorway. "I'm Pernickety—Mr. Pernickety," he said, "are you Mr. Goss?" Then, noticing someone emerging from a small office, he added—"But perhaps I am lucky enough to find both the brothers in."

We introduced ourselves; brother Joseph was called away to the telephone.

"You were good enough to send me some patterns for a country tweed suit, Mr. Goss. I am proposing to try your tailoring because my tailor seems to have lost patience with me. I admit that my requirements are exacting, but at least I *know* what I want."

"That is usually very helpful," said Goss.

"Well, now, first of all let me say that I only intended to call in at this moment to make a later appointment. You see I always have a cup of coffee at this hour—but, I wonder, would you care to join me, Mr. Goss?"

★ ★ ★

The waitress set down two cups of coffee. Mr. Pernickety, producing a small wallet of tiny paper serviettes, proceeded most meticulously to wipe, first his fingers, then the saucer, then the spoon, then the edge of the cup, and finally the two pieces of sugar before dropping them carefully into his coffee.

This ritual over, Mr. Pernickety proceeded to discuss from every conceivable angle the making of a suit of clothes. His many requirements noted, Goss's new customer returned to the measuring room where a long discussion followed over cloths, measurements, appointments for fitting, instructions for despatch, etc., etc.

★ ★ ★

But in case you should think that you may be caricatured if you become a customer of Goss, let us say at once that Mr. Pernickety is a composite character created out of some of our more exacting customers over a period of several years. The story serves to illustrate, we hope, a point which we have often made here—namely, that Goss tailoring will rise to meet exceptional demands.

All measuring, cutting and fitting are done by the Goss brothers personally. In the best materials a Goss suit or overcoat now costs from Seven to Nine Guineas, but a thoroughly reliable Goss suit can be (and is) made at Six Guineas.

★

T. GOSS & COMPANY

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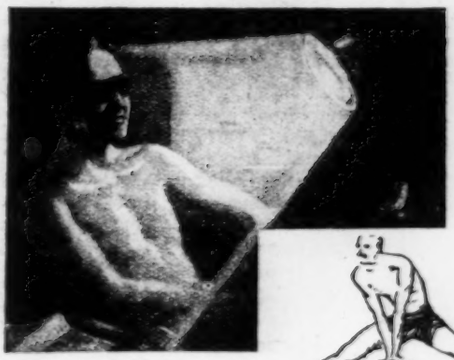
Opposite Post Office Station *'Phone: City 8259*

BE WELL!
. . . *really* WELL
Why not?



Full of Vigour and Cheer!

BRIGHT, cheerful, FIT . . . ready to tackle work or play with energy and confidence—that is how you feel after a few days at the seaside, when day by day you have basked in the summer sun.

That, too, is how you feel after a short course of the Homesun Lamp.

Why?

Because the rays of the Homesun Lamp are the self-same ultra-violet rays that you get from the sun, but in highly concentrated form.

Moreover, with a Homesun Lamp you need only a few minutes each day to reap the full benefit of these tonic rays—rays which in winter are entirely denied to you—nine days out of ten.

As a protection to your health—to cope with biting East winds and the depressing effect of dreary winter days, there is no more remarkable tonic known to science.

A short course of the Homesun Lamp this winter will give tone and vigour to your entire system.

Anyone can use the Homesun Lamp. No wise household should be without one. Just send a postcard or return the coupon below.

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Will last for years.
No parts to renew.
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Please send me your illustrated free booklet on home Sun Bathing.

Name .....

Address .....

.....

309 76

The Poems of T. Sturge Moore. Collected Edition. Third Volume. *Macmillan.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

Mr. Sturge Moore has arranged his poems in sequence of mood and of imaginative choice. The third volume of his collected works can be read, therefore, for its own sake and when the concluding volume appears we may surmise that critics will be surprised by the unusual homogeneity of his work. We are deprived of the usual exercises of criticism, the inquiry into a poet's development, the comparison between early and later work. Here, in fact, is a poet whose work, within its precise range, expresses an unusual integrity of mind. One may be attracted to this meditative poet or repelled by an assiduity and seriousness that take no account of our human weakness, our inattentiveness. No poet certainly who has accepted the traditional world of classic myth, in which English imagination has found itself, has vivified so familiarly the older mind of paganism. Were it not for his aesthetic theories one might accept Mr. Sturge Moore's imaginative pieties as those of a believer. Certainly he has recovered the tender, devout soul of the pagan, obscured for us by centuries of theological contempt. The patient will find for themselves the intimacies of his images. How fine is this glimpse of a devout pagan's hut by the sea-shore:

> Menalcas, I have seen my home's one room
> Aglint with shells that serve for platter and bowl,
> The model ship that hangs behind the altar
> Enshrined, with tanned nets cloudily festooned;
> That bunch of corals pendant from the roof
> Like blood some wounded god shed in salt water.

Of the dramatic idylls and plays in this volume one may mention *Medea*, an experimental drama which, as Mr. Sturge Moore tells us, he was asked to write by Mr. W. B. Yeats. The experimental poetic drama of a new kind which is being explored by Mr. Sturge Moore, Mr. Yeats and Mr. Gordon Bottomley brings us into a strange world of mediumistic imagination. It is interesting that three poets of the elder generation have found similar inspiration in a new form, though this fact has not received the attention it deserves. Mr. Sturge Moore's play is a notable contribution to the form.

Hearing in Man and Animals. By R. T. BEATTY, M.A., D.S.C. *Bell.* 12*s.*

This is a very competent and painstaking piece of work by the senior scientific research officer attached to the Admiralty. It covers a wide field: the structure of the ear, theories of hearing, hearing in animals, music, noise, including a chapter on the effects of the appalling daily street and other noises from which we suffer. The book will interest the general reader as well as the specialist. It contains good illustrations and up-to-date bibliographies. It can be unreservedly recommended.

Playtime

CALIBAN'S PROBLEM CONTEST

No. 8.—MURDER ON THE UNDERGROUND

The following is the schedule* of the last train but one from Charing Cross to Baker Street:

		a.m.
Charing Cross	dep.	12.17
Trafalgar Square	arr.	12.18
	dep.	12.20
Piccadilly	arr.	12.22
	dep.	12.24
Oxford Circus	arr.	12.25
	dep.	12.27
Regents Park	arr.	12.29
	dep.	12.30
Baker Street	arr.	12.32

The Mafia leader, Zucco, was found dead in the train at Baker Street. He had been stabbed through the heart. Experts testified that he must have died "almost instantaneously," and that he could not have been dead for more than fifteen minutes.

Scotland Yard is certain that the murderer is one of the following: Buffo, Spaghetti, Macaroni and Zambaglione.

Detective-Sgt. Bright, in charge of the case, finds the movements of the suspects to have been as follows:

(1) *Buffo.* Was at Aldgate a little after 12.15 a.m., where he asked a constable the time. The constable is "practically certain" of his identity.

(2) *Spaghetti.* Left the train at Charing Cross (12.15 a.m.) and walked to Trafalgar Square, where at 12.25 a.m. he boarded a 13 bus for Baker Street. He was talking to two friends in Northumberland Avenue between 12.16 and 12.20 a.m.

*The data of this problem are purely fictitious.

(3) *Macaroni.* Booked for Regents Park at Trafalgar Square Station at 12.19 a.m. Macaroni, who was "wanted" by Scotland Yard, was spotted, while booking, by Detective Sharp who followed him down the escalator and into the train and arrested him at Regents Park Station.

Detective Sharp is prepared to swear, however, that the train boarded by Macaroni was not the 12.20 from Trafalgar Square but the next train, the 12.23.

(4) *Zambaglione.* Was seen at midnight in Zucco's company in Chianti's restaurant near Piccadilly. The two men were obviously in ill-humour. They were next seen at Piccadilly Circus Station "about 12.10 a.m.," where Zucco took two tickets for Regents Park. Zambaglione declares, however, that at the last moment he refused to accompany Zucco and returned to Chianti's restaurant, and three witnesses state that they saw him there between 12.20 a.m. and 12.25 a.m.

By whom was Zucco stabbed, and in what circumstances?

PROBLEM 6.—BARBARA'S LITTLE FLUTTER

Mr. Shovelton's solution is as follows:

Denote the horses by

R O Y G B I V.

As no two girls won the same amount and the largest was 15*d.*, the amounts must have been 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, the total amount won being 84 (= 3 + 6 + 9 + 12 + 15 + 18 + 21).

The winnings must be made up of:

1sts 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14
2nds 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7

Each number is used once (i.e., a first and a second for each race) and no second can be used with its corresponding first.

The winners of 9 and 10 have two seconds.

Consider how 9 and 10 can be made up:

9 = 2 + 3 + 4, or 2 + 2 + 5, or 4 + 1 + 4, or 6 + 1 + 2
10 = 2 + 2 + 6, or 2 + 3 + 5, or 4 + 1 + 5.

And 2, 2, 6 must be associated with 4, 1, 4;

The seconds left over are 3, 5, 7 and these added to the firsts give

6	9, 11, 13	(or 14 if two seconds)
8	11, 13, 15	
10	13	(for 10 + 5 is impossible)
12	15	
14		

Now there are two without seconds and these must be 12, 14.

15 must therefore be 8 + 7
13 „ „ „ 10 + 3
11 „ „ „ 6 + 5

Thus the only solution is:

9 = 4 + 1 + 4 Gerty
10 = 2 + 2 + 6 Ruth
11 = 6 + 5
12 = 12
13 = 10 + 3
14 = 14
15 = 8 + 7 Violet

Therefore the horses won in the order:

V I B G Y O R

Hence

14	R	owned by	Olive
12	O	„	Iris
10	Y	„	Barbara
8	G	„	Violet
6	B	„	Yvonne
4	I	„	Gerty
2	V	„	Ruth

PROBLEM 5.—LEGATEES

A set of Low's cartoons is awarded to:

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There were 111 correct and forty-one incorrect solutions.

On the cumulative point basis, *six* points are awarded for this problem.

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THE WEEK IN THE CITY

By TOREADOR

THE AMERICAN SCENE—GOVERNMENT'S GILT-EDGED POLICY—RAILWAY DIVIDENDS—GAS

WHEN Mr. Henry Ford cannot cash a cheque in Detroit, most Americans will think that the end of their civilisation has come. The closing of the Union Guardian Trust Company of Detroit, and the eight-day banking holiday in the State of Michigan, may have been precipitated by a local crisis—the refusal of the Ford Motor Company to subordinate its claims to $7½ millions deposits to those of the small depositors—but the pressure which induced the Union Guardian Trust Company to "cut and run" from the banking business is not local but common to every State in America. The unpleasant truth is that the banking crisis has returned because of the universal increase in hoarding. First, proposals for rank inflation of currency, which had been laid before Congress, have been undermining confidence. Next, the decision to make public the individual loans of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation naturally caused depositors to suspect the banks which had received help. The sharp increase in note circulation this year plainly indicates that hoarding is again the fashion. It was significant that, instead of dropping sharply after the turn of the year, the note circulation in America increased. The same thing happened at the beginning of 1932. The last two weeks' statements of the Federal Reserve system disclosed an increase of $53 millions and $41 millions respectively in note circulation. At the same time Federal Reserve banks have begun to sell Government securities—a reversal of their cheap money policy. This was interpreted as a confession that they were over-extended in Government bonds. Mr. Roosevelt, who appears to hate making up his mind, will now be delighted that his policy is forced upon him—the policy of saving the banking system, as Mr. Hoover did, through Government loans. In the last resort, the Government may have to guarantee bank deposits. Already it has been forced to guarantee mortgages. A Realty Stabilisation Corporation has been formed to use the funds of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation in the re-financing of maturing mortgages—in particular, guaranteed mortgages. I need not repeat the warnings which I have previously given of the investment situation in America, but a collapse in Wall Street and an exchange rate of 3.45, may give investors in this country a grand opportunity. I suggest Australian 5 per cent. dollar bonds at 75 to begin with.

* * *

The only people who will read with complete satisfaction the Prime Minister's letter on unemployment policy to the Bethnal Green Council will be the holders of British Government stocks. If the Government has rejected for all time the idea of State-assisted relief works, if it intends to make no use of its 3½ per cent. borrowing powers in furthering housing, slum-clearance, land drainage, road building and other capital schemes, the gilt-edged market need have no fears of competition arising out of the issue of State-guaranteed loans. I regret it. However, it is conceivable that if its policy is directed solely towards creating conditions favourable for a revival of private enterprise, the Government is aiming at a fresh rise in the gilt-edged market in order to bring down the rate of interest to a stilll lower level. Cheaper money has already stimulated private building and still cheaper money may even bring about a building boom. This is no doubt Sir Hilton Young's dream. At the moment British Government long-dated stocks are returning yields of about 3½ per cent. Whether a 3 per cent. or even 3½ per cent. credit basis can be won without the psychological stimulus of a reduction in direct taxation is doubtful. Tax relief may have to wait upon a war debt settlement, but if the Government's sole policy is to pamper private enterprise its logical conclusion is a 1s. off the income tax.

* * *

The directors of the Great Western Railway surprised everyone by declaring a 3 per cent. dividend, unearned, on nearly £43 millions of ordinary stock. They have now added offensiveness to surprise by enclosing with the full report to stockholders a reprint of Sir Ralph Wedgwood's final speech to the National Wages Board outlining the railway companies' case for a reduction in wages. Do they imagine that the average railway stockholder delights in receiving dividends which are not earned and in withholding wages which have been fully earned? I am told that in the hard times of 1867-8 the Great Western Railway directors were passing ordinary stock dividends and even paying preference stock dividends in scrip. Perhaps it is charitable to assume that it is the same old board at work to-day, anxious to redeem their shortcomings of sixty-five years ago. On one point, however, the Great Western directors are to be congratulated: they have hastened public acceptance of the nationalisation of the railways. In preparing their Bill, on the Salter Committee Report, to provide for the licensing and better regulation of the transport of goods by road, the Government will now be encouraged to take wider powers, including the licensing and better regulation of railway company dividends. To pay 3 per cent. on their ordinary stock the Great Western Railway directors took the whole of the general reserve (£700,000), £400,000 from the contingency fund and some £606,000 being profit on realisation of investments. Here I may acknowledge a correction pointed out by a railway official. Not long ago I over-stated the amounts which the railways directors had drawn from reserves to pay unearned dividends in 1923-26. It was £17 millions—not £26 millions. Only that!

* * *

The Southern Railway, which has given a lead to the other lines in the matter of the electrification of its suburban passenger services, is the only one of the four groups to earn anything on its equity stock in 1932. It is paying 1 per cent. on its preferred ordinary, thus maintaining "Chancery" trustee status for its prior charges (eligible only in England). By paying 3 per cent. on its ordinary stock, the Great Western keeps its full trustee status, but I doubt whether Scottish trustees will feel grateful for the privilege of being able to invest in a railway preference stock whose dividends have not been fully earned. The following table shows the earnings and dividend status of the preference and ordinary stocks of the three lines which have issued their results.

	Preference Stocks. Times Divs. Covered.	Divs. Paid %	Market Price.	Annual Div. Yield %
L.M. & S. 4%	1.03	3	41	£7 6 4
L.M. & S. 5%	0.98	3⅞	54	6 18 11
L.M. & S. 4% 1923	0.84	nil	23	nil
G.W. Rly. 5%	0.97	5	80½	6 3 10
G.W. Rly. 5% 1950	0.91	5	92½	5 8 1
Southern 5%	1.11	5	80½	6 3 10
Southern 5% 1964	1.09	5	85	5 17 8
	Ordinary Stocks. % Earned.	% Paid.		
L.M.S. Ord.	nil	nil	14½	nil
G.W. Rly. Ord.	nil	3	33⅛	9 0 5
Southern Pfd. Ord.	1.4	1	30	3 6 8

Railway traffics so far this year are down and economies, as the L.M. & S. directors say, are harder to realise. For those who believe in a trade recovery, the railway stocks to purchase are L.M. & S. 4 per cent. or 4 per cent. 1923 preference and Southern 5 per cent. preferred ordinary. To earn its preference stock dividends in full the net earnings of the L.M. & S. would have to rise by nearly 26 per cent. from the 1932 level. Such an event would probably cause the 4 per cent. 1923 preference stock to rise from 23 to, say, 70. To earn 5 per cent. on its preferred ordinary stock the net earnings of the Southern would have to rise by about 20 per cent, which would probably cause this stock to rise from 30 to, say, 80

* * *

I am surprised that directors of gas companies do not blow up over the question of anti-gas legislation. Do the shareholders of gas companies realise that their directors cannot yet raise fresh debenture capital except by tender? This insult will be removed if the Bill pending in Parliament is passed, but Dr. Carpenter, the President of the South Metropolitan Gas Company, drew the attention of his shareholders to a more serious complaint—that gas making is not regarded as a productive industry within the meaning of the Coal Mines Act of 1932. Gas companies are, therefore, compelled to pay a higher price for their raw material than iron and steel companies and even foreign consumers. The actual price charged to the gas companies is decided by a committee of coal owners and is governed largely by the working of the quota system, under which definite outputs are allocated to every colliery whether economically conducted or otherwise. According to Dr. Carpenter, the non-classification of gas-making as a productive industry costs the South Metropolitan nearly £100,000 per annum. Another handicap is the inability to quote special prices for gas to industrial users. It is only by developing the use of gas in industrial processes that the gas companies can look forward to a more rapid expansion. A wider investment interest may be taken in the Gas Light and Coke Company now that it is able, under the Gas Undertakings Act of 1932, to invest in other gas companies or allied industries. The company has begun by taking an interest in the South Eastern Gas Corporation, a holding company formed to acquire the Folkestone, Deal and Walmer, Whitstable, and other gas concerns.

London Amusements

MATINEES

All at 2.30 p.m. unless otherwise stated.

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DUCHESS. Children in Uniform. Wed., Sat.

GLOBE. Doctor's Orders. Wed. & Sat.

QUEEN'S. Once in a Lifetime. Sat.

ST. MARTIN'S. The Green Bay Tree. Tu. F.

WESTMINSTER. Princess in the Cage. Sat.

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A course of three Lectures on "AFRICAN LANGUAGES" will be given by PROFESSOR DR. D. WESTERMANN (Director of the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures, Berlin) at THE LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS (Houghton Street, Aldwych, W.C.2) on MARCH 2nd, 3rd and 7th, at 6 p.m. At the first Lecture the Chair will be taken by the Right Hon. Lord Lugard, P.C., G.C.M.G., C.B., D.S.O.

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CAPTAIN P. P. ECKERSLEY will speak on "Broadcasting" at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, Holborn, on Tuesday, February 21st, at 7 o'clock. ADMISSION FREE.

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COMPANY MEETING

GAS LIGHT AND COKE CO.

SIR DAVID MILNE-WATSON'S REVIEW

The 226th ordinary general meeting of The Gas Light and Coke Company was held on Friday, February 10, at Horseferry Road, Westminster, S.W. Sir David Milne-Watson, LL.D., D.L. (the governor), presiding, said (in part):

I propose first of all to call your attention to the capital account. There has been a net increase in the expenditure of £316,000, after allowing for sundry credits for depreciation. We have spent some £492,000 on new mains, meters and stoves. It is inevitable that, if the company is to obtain new business when taking over extended areas, money should first of all be spent on laying new mains to supply the district. Turning to the revenue account, I regret to say that there is a decrease of 2½ per cent. in the gas sold, largely due, I think, to the general depression in trade, which has been felt in our district in common with the rest of the country. It must also be remembered that the weather in the early part of last year was extremely mild, and this had an effect on the output for the year. As evidence of this, I may mention that the sales for the current year to date show a satisfactory increase as compared with the corresponding period of last year. The revenue from gas for the year under review fell by £229,000, and the revenue from the rental of automatic supply fittings by £28,000.

I am glad to say, however, that there was an increase in the gas sold under the heading of public lighting, showing that the company is progressing in that direction. It is particularly gratifying to know that the supreme excellence of modern gas lighting has been proved by the decision of the City of Westminster to renew for a period of fifteen years the contract to light by gas fifty-five miles of streets in Central London including some of the most famous thoroughfares in the world, such as Whitehall, Regent Street, and Pall Mall.

Gas has been substituted for electricity in several localities, including the whole of the Uxbridge Road, which runs through Acton, and the Feltham Urban District Council has recently had the electric lamps removed and gas lamps fixed in their place. From these facts it will be seen that it is a great mistake to think that we have lost our lighting load, and it is well to remember that an enormous number of private houses are to-day lit by gas.

With regard to residuals, there has been a large increase—£142,000—in the revenue from tar and tar products. This increase is due to the improved business in road tars and pitch, and also to the company's ever-increasing production of benzole. Benzole is the only native motor spirit produced in this country, and when mixed with petrol or used by itself it is one of the finest motor spirits known.

It is sad to see sulphate of ammonia producing a loss. In the past we have made as much as £200,000 to £300,000 a year profit from this product, but this year we have made a loss of £4,000. I hope, however, by the arrangement which has been come to by synthetic ammonia plant owners in various countries to prevent over-production that the senseless and ruinous competition between producers will be stopped, and that the sulphate of ammonia industry, whether by-product or synthetic, will be able to make at least some profit.

On the debit side of the account you will see that the amount paid for coal is somewhat larger. This is due to our having manufactured more coal gas and less oil gas than in the previous year. There is a large saving on oil used due to the smaller quantity utilised, and also to the lower price at which we have been able to purchase it.

THE YEAR'S RESULT

The balance transferred from the revenue account to the profit and loss account is £2,035,000, as against £2,031,000 for the previous year. This, after adding the sum of £12,000 received from His Majesty's Treasury in respect of the Development Act, 1929, and after allowing for interest on borrowed money for the year and the dividends distributed in respect of the June half-year, leaves the sum of £914,000 from which to pay dividends for the December half-year.

This sum enables the directors to recommend the usual dividend on the Four per Cent. Consolidated Preference stock, the Six per Cent. Brentwood Redeemable Preference stock, and the Three and a Half per Cent. Maximum stock, and a dividend at the rate of £5 12s. per cent. per annum on the Ordinary stock. The payment of these dividends, together with the necessary contribution of £20,000 to the redemption fund in respect of the half-year ended December, will absorb £698,000, leaving £216,000 to be carried forward to the credit of the current year's accounts, as against £206,000 carried forward on the last occasion—which sum included £66,000 in respect of the amounts carried forward by the Southend and Brentwood Companies.

As this is the first year in which the company has worked under the basic system with regard to the payment of dividends, you will be glad to know that the system fully authorises the payment of a dividend on the Ordinary stock of the company at the rate of £5 12s. per cent. per annum, the rate that was paid previously under the provisions of the sliding scale.

In July last the company raised one million Four and a Half per Cent. Redeemable Debenture stock at par. We were needing the money, and at that time the terms on which the issue was made were considered to be extremely favourable. As you all know, however, the Government shortly after the date of our issue launched its Conversion scheme, a scheme the news of which had been very closely guarded. This had the effect of putting up the value of all such Debenture stocks as ours, and it must not be thought, therefore, that because this particular stock is now standing at a much higher figure than par the issue was in any way an unwise one.

With regard to the company's activities generally the company's last bill in Parliament received the Royal Assent in July. By this Act we take over Canvey Island, a district hitherto without a supply of gas, where we are now busy laying mains. It also gave us power to erect works on the Thames waterside of the island.

The Southend-on-Sea and Brentwood Gas Companies became part of our organisation in January last year, and I am glad to say that good progress is being made in these new districts.

COMPETITION FROM OIL

On the gas sales side competition is very intense, and is tending to become more so. Oil is introduced into the country free of tax and is a powerful competitor with coke and gas, and for that matter with electricity. This ought to receive careful consideration by the Government in view of the state of the coal industry of the country.

Among other activities we are busily engaged in research work with regard to the use of compressed gas for motor vehicles.

I would like to call your attention specially to what we are doing with regard to the use of gas for industrial purposes—an outlet for gas which is not as well known as it ought to be. During the year we have made great advances in this direction. There is no doubt that there is a large future for this kind of business, and we look forward with great confidence to increased sales of gas in this direction. We actually serve to-day, for various industrial purposes, some 14,400 factories in our area.

NEW USES AND METHODS

I should now like to make one or two general observations about gas. Even in these days of keen competition the company is sometimes referred to as though it enjoyed a monopoly. That was to some extent true many years ago, but to-day there is no corner of our sales field in which we do not have to face rivalry, but we are prepared to meet this rivalry with confidence. There are two reasons for this. First, because we know that the most efficient and economical method of obtaining the heat from coal is by the manufacture of gas from it. Secondly, because we never allow our business methods to become conservative; we are always seeking to find fresh uses for gas, better appliances, and more convenient means of service.

The history of the company in the last few years may, I think, be described fairly, and without boasting, as a signal achievement in adaptability to new conditions. Everyone knows how gas has revolutionised the kitchens of London. There is no famous hotel or restaurant in our area which does not use gas in its kitchens, but my remarks apply also to the smallest tenement flats. Gas fires are in general use everywhere and are constantly increasing in numbers. Gas has no rival for price, efficiency and reliability, but there is still great room for expansion in many other directions, such as water heating and in industrial processes generally.

After referring to the Company's smokeless fuel, "Cleanglow," the Governor emphasised the necessity for legislation both to remove the anomalies under which the Company was suffering and to allow the industry to compete for business with the same freedom as that enjoyed by oil and electricity.

Continuing, the Governor referred to the benefits of amalgamations, and said the larger undertakings have an advantage over the smaller in being able to acquire capital more readily, and, in many cases, on better terms; and, moreover, they have at their command the means whereby higher standards of efficiency in gas supply and in the marketing of residuals can be obtained. Advantages are also gained through the ability to give better service to consumers and to co-ordinate the selling policy in regard to gas and residuals, thus obtaining better financial results, to the inevitable benefit of gas consumers.

In pursuance of this policy the company has joined a group called the South Eastern Gas Corporation, Ltd.—as to which you have no doubt seen various references recently in the financial papers—and has obtained a controlling interest therein. The corporation holds the stock of certain gas undertakings, including Folkestone, Deal and Walmer, and Whitstable. Negotiations have only recently been completed, and at this stage of the proceedings it is too early to give you more than a general idea. I feel sure that the arrangement will be to the advantage not only of the companies that have been taken over by this corporation, but to the Gas Light and Coke Co. itself.

During the past year the staff have worked exceedingly well, and I am particularly gratified at the increase of the true co-partnership spirit in the company.

TRADE REVIVAL AND WISE SPENDING

From the observations we are able to make in this company there seems to be a slight revival in trade and business—but only very slight. What we feel is wanted is confidence, and if only people would get that confidence and begin to spend money again I am sure that there would very soon be an improvement. Trade can never be restored unless those who have money are prepared to exchange it for goods. The banks are full of money at the present time, for which they pay very little interest. It would be infinitely wiser for people to use their money in purchasing goods and giving work, as that is the only way in which trade can be set going.

The tariffs which have been put on in this country will be chiefly of advantage if they lead to the taking off of tariffs generally. I must not, however, be led into a political discussion, and therefore I shall conclude with saying that as far as our own company is concerned the prospects are good, and that when the revival of trade and industry takes place we shall be fully prepared to take advantage of it.

The report and accounts were adopted, and at an extraordinary general meeting which followed the company's Bill now before Parliament was approved.

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